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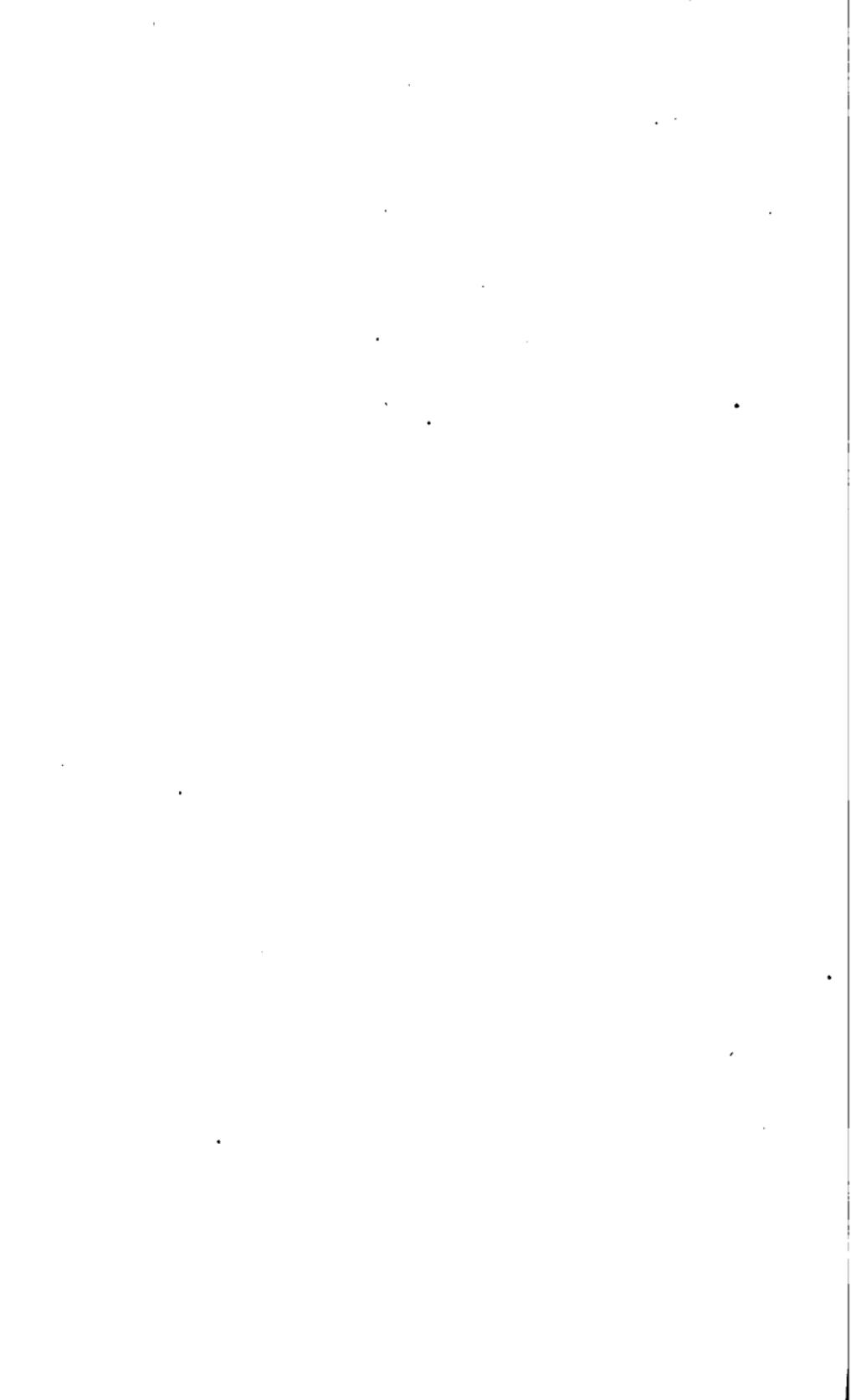
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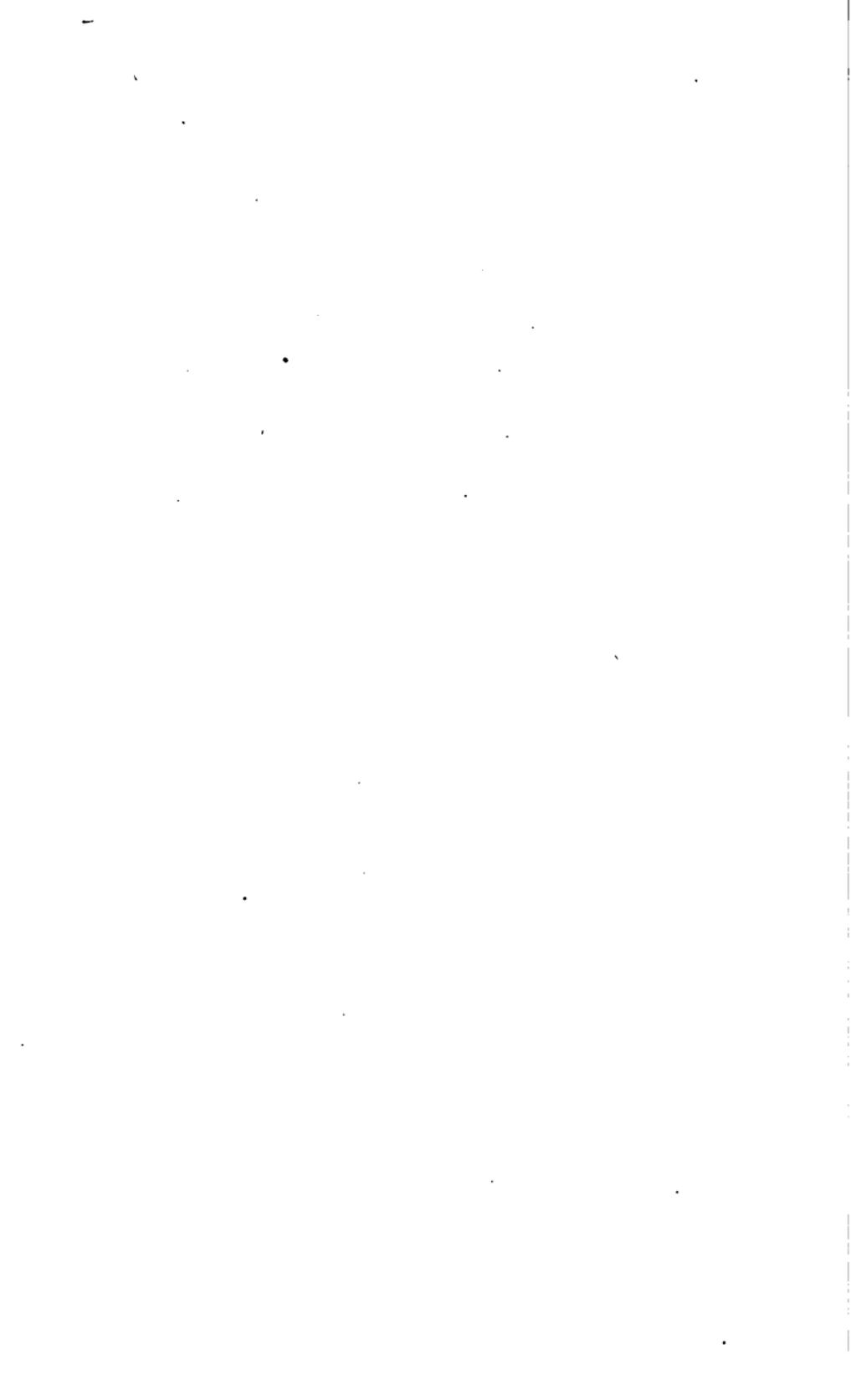
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HANDBOOK

TO

THE MASTERY SERIES.

BY

THOMAS PRENDERGAST,

AUTHOR OF 'THE MASTERY OF LANGUAGES; OR, THE ART OF SPEAKING
FOREIGN TONGUES IDIOMATICALLY.'

NEW YORK:
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PREFACE.

WHAT TO LEARN and How to LEARN a great deal in a small compass—these are the questions which perplex every person who is intent upon qualifying himself to speak a foreign language.

There is a profusion of elementary works, but it is hard to determine which to select, because no method has been singled out and stamped with the approval of the learned.

It is only by the study of nature that we can hope to discover the true method, whether for arranging what the beginner is to learn, or for laying down principles for his guidance in learning it. The simplest and most effective course that can be pursued, as an initiation, is to keep in view the natural process of hourly ringing the changes upon a few sentences, with occasional additions.

The most successful of all linguists are children who have already learned to speak their mother-tongue. When taken abroad and left among foreigners, they acquire two new languages at once, without any assistance, and speak them idiomatically, although with a very limited vocabulary. They do not philosophise,

nor do they form any plans for their procedure, but in pursuance of the dictates of instinct, they imitate and repeat with unflinching perseverance, chance combinations of unfamiliar sounds, and afterwards analyze them at leisure. But the true method underlying their operations, and the causes of their success, have never been detected, nor has their procedure been accurately observed and adopted. After some weeks of great perplexity, during which their speech is full of imperfections, they begin to deliver a few idiomatic sentences with intelligence, decision, and fluency. By means of imitation and repetition, they not only fix them in the memory, so as to reproduce them with great accuracy, but also multiply them by transferring the words and phrases from one sentence to another. This is the whole process, so far as outwardly discernible action is concerned. The stage of progress above described is one which every person who has ever learned to speak any language idiomatically, whether child or adult, must inevitably have passed through.

The Mastery System adopts their procedure at that stage, eliminating the ingredient of chance, and discarding all those irrelevant and embarrassing preliminaries which are generally considered essential. The beginner is placed at once on an equality with a child who has been struggling for some weeks against stupendous difficulties. But he has this advantage—that he is exempted from the perplexity created by confused and conflicting recollections of a mass of unconnected words, and from that humiliating sensation of incapacity, which

is always experienced by an adult so bewildered when he first endeavours to express his thoughts with unfamiliar words.

The beginner is not allowed to compose any sentences for himself, the transpositions of the words into their proper combinations being effected for him. He is merely the recipient of a stock of practical sentences, which he recites as fluently as if they were English, and these in due course become receptacles for other words, and models for other sentences. The English versions of the foreign combinations which he has learned are always kept before him, and no other exercise is allowed than that of retranslating them from memory in irregular succession, with the words of each new lesson interwoven among them. The oftener he recurs to this exercise during each day, the more expeditiously will he form the habit of reproducing the idiomatic sentences with accuracy and fluency. As he advances, this habit gradually extends itself to the whole language, because the sentences so arranged ought to include all its constructions, and thus to leave nothing else to be acquired but additional words.

The whole mechanism of the language is presented to him in a compact form, and without seeing a grammar, or hearing a single technical term, he obtains a practical and intelligent appreciation of the constructions not less effective in every sense than that resulting from the most careful study of the theory. He is relieved from all exertion of the memory beyond that of reproducing sentences, which he is required either to hear or to read

at the commencement of each exercise, before he attempts to rehearse them. This ensures the accurate retention of every word of every sentence in its genuine idiomatic order of arrangement.

The Classical Languages may obviously be treated in a similar manner; the study of grammar being wholly excluded, while this initiatory course of Mastery is going on. Under the classical system we learn the grammar and study the language, instead of learning the language and studying the grammar. Children learn languages without studying them, but we study them for many years, without even approximating to the colloquial attainment, or, in other words, the power of oral composition. This is, in reality, the true beginning, because it is the simplest, the most direct, the most natural, and the most conducive to the ulterior attainment of the other branches of the study. This is the true beginning, but for certain weighty reasons it is never attempted in our schools, and therefore we never master Greek and Latin, even on a small scale.

Mastery is calculated to impart to learners, at any stage of their career, that thorough grounding, the want of which is so helplessly deplored by teachers. In fact, it is the missing link between the perfect process of nature on the one hand, and all the wrong systems now in vogue on the other.

The Mastery System is designed to secure economy of *time* and labour, by compressing a great deal of the language into a small compass;—to point out the simplest mode of acquiring a good pronunciation;—

to familiarize the beginner with the characteristic constructions and the inflections of the foreign language embodied in a set of comprehensive, or, if possible, exhaustive sentences ;—to regulate his course, so that he shall have the consciousness of making definite daily progress in oral composition ;—to call forth self-reliance, by showing him how to initiate himself without a teacher ;—to exclude everything non-essential ;—to aid the memory so as to secure perfect accuracy ; to test its power of retention, in order to determine with precision how much ought to be learned in each day ;— to qualify the learner, by the frequency of his daily exercises, to reproduce all that he has learned with fluency, accuracy, and promptitude, and to develop his command of the language by evolving from the sentences in his possession a large variety of useful idiomatic Variations, by mastering which he obtains a great facility in oral composition, founded upon a thorough acquaintance with the syntactical constructions.

In the German Manual, the sentences are devised so as to show in what manner this system can be applied to Greek and Latin. In the French Manual, the same amount of grammatical knowledge is conveyed distributively, but not less effectively, than in the more scholastic plan of the German.

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE digestion and the absorption into the mental tissues of foreign languages by adults has ever been regarded as an operation of great difficulty, an impression which is mainly derived from the discouraging results of misdirected efforts.

During the summer of 1867 the writer had occasion to make a critical examination of the systems of deaf-mute instruction in central and northern Europe.

French, learned in the old-fashioned way, was the only foreign language at his command. Of German he knew absolutely nothing; and yet to examine the articulating deaf-mute schools in Germany was one of his most important objects.

The acquirement, therefore, of some facility in the German language was a necessity, and it was important that the time devoted to its study should be made to yield the largest possible results.

Most opportunely making the acquaintance of Mr. Prendergast and of his theory before leaving England for the Continent, the writer determined to put the Mastery system to the test in Germany.

He had not the advantage of the valuable manual recently given to the public, but was compelled to prepare his own specimen sentences, more applicable, it is true, in some respects to the objects he had in view, but naturally far less effective in the acquirement of the language for general purposes. The theory, however, of the Mastery system he followed implicitly.

The results which crowned the labor of the first week were so astonishing that he fears to detail them fully, lest doubts should be raised as to his credibility. But thus

much he does not hesitate to claim, that after a study of less than two weeks he was able to sustain conversation in the newly-acquired language on a great variety of subjects.

During the month of travel in Germany which immediately followed, he made the language of the country almost the sole medium of communication with others, and afterwards in the northern portions of Europe found the German far more at command than his French, to which many months of study had been given after the old-time plan of grammars and paradigms.

Hundreds of pages of valuable matter were secured for the writer's journal solely through the medium of spoken German; and in Finland a most interesting investigation was conducted wherein this was the only available language of interpretation.

So completely did the Mastery system vindicate its practicability in the test to which it was thus subjected, that the writer feels it his duty, as it is his pleasure, to recommend it whenever and wherever opportunity offers.

And not only to scholars and students of linguistic science would he extend this recommendation, but to tourists and pleasure-seekers who may, perchance, have but a limited amount of time for their foreign investigations.

With but two months in a country, the resultant pleasure and profit to the traveller, who should devote two weeks faithfully to the study of the language upon the Mastery system, having then six weeks for actual travel, largely if not wholly independent of interpreters and *valets-de-place*, and possessing a certain though limited means of communication with all he meets, would be unquestionably greater than if he were to blunder through eight weeks, at the mercy of half-educated couriers and interested hotel-keepers, as is done by the majority of Americans in Europe.

E. M. GALLAUDET.

NATIONAL DEAF-MUTE COLLEGE,
Washington, D. C., March 7, 1868.

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HANDBOOK
TO
THE MASTERY SERIES.

1. The term 'MASTERY' is employed in this work to denote the power of using the idiomatic forms of a foreign language as fluently and promptly as those of the mother tongue.
2. The Mastery system requires that long sentences shall be placed before the beginner, divided into short sections, accompanied by their Variations in both languages. The English versions of these Variations being separately placed before the beginner, he must acquire, by practice, the habit of giving the foreign equivalent of each of them with the utmost fluency. This habit will be much more effectually attained by practice carried on at intervals than by continuous application.
3. The learner is not to commence by making translations and giving them to a teacher to be corrected; but by storing his memory with idiomatic sentences. Unconnected words are not language, and therefore must be excluded. Idiomatic diction and correct pronunciation, being the two primary essentials, are provided for from the first.
4. As idiomatic sentences cannot be constructed by a beginner at the outset, but can only be reproduced by the action of the memory, he is never to compose any sentences or Variations for himself, but to receive them all ready-made, and to commit them very thoroughly to memory.

5. The Variations of each lesson are to be Mastered before a new one is undertaken.

6. The correct utterance of foreign sentences being of the utmost importance, the beginner's chief care must be to attain it by echoing the sounds, the tones, the pauses, the accents, and the cadences of the teacher's voice, in the rapid reiteration of each new lesson, and of all its Variations. The preference should be given to a teacher with a clear, soft, articulate utterance, but this duty may be performed by any well-educated foreigner quite as well as by a professor. In fact, any foreigner who can read his own language may be employed on an emergency. It must be remembered that pronunciation is merely mechanical. The vocal organs being placed in a certain form, certain results necessarily follow. If they are not placed in that form, those results cannot be obtained. Words are not to be practised singly, but always in combination ; the pronunciation of all the sounds in any language may be, and ought to be, acquired within the compass of the first hundred words.

7. In the colloquial acquisition of languages the intellect works mechanically ; the reasoning powers are not called into active exercise, and the operation is performed almost exclusively by the memory : for these reasons the sittings are made extremely short. The prevailing practice, however, is to appeal chiefly to the understanding of the beginner ; this leads to the imposition of a burden on the memory far greater than it can bear, while the blame of the failure is unjustly imputed to the understanding. When the memory has made an ineffectual effort to recall a word, the imagination and the understanding can afford it no assistance ; the only alternative is to guess ; but nothing can be more opposed to the precision required in the speaking of languages than guess-work, as an error thus committed is likely to become habitual. On this account the memory should be refreshed, instead of be-

ing taxed to reproduce the words, at the beginning of each lesson.

8. It is useless to ignore the fact that the reproduction of foreign sentences in their true idiomatic order must be the work of the memory, and that the most brilliant intellect, at the outset, is incapable of reproducing the words in their proper order, except by exertions of that faculty. The non-recognition of this truth by teachers is quite unaccountable. If this pursuit were a highly intellectual one, children taken amongst foreigners would not surpass educated men in speaking idiomatically. And, if the study of grammar were essential as an initiation, the power of speech would be limited to a very small fraction of the habitable globe. As an excuse for that repugnance and infirmity of purpose which assails so many beginners, some persons plead a natural disability for learning other languages. But this amounts virtually to a confession that they are incapable of learning from day to day as many words as a half-witted child acquires by mere efforts of memory. The general aversion to this pursuit and the numerous failures that occur spring from the irrational modes of teaching, and the total misunderstanding of the principles by which beginners ought to be guided. A strong evidence of this ignorance is exhibited by educated men when they express a wish to learn a very little, just sufficient to enable them to enter into general conversation, indulging the vain hope that they may be enabled to talk on many subjects before they can talk on any one.

9. The general meaning of each lesson is to be given at the outset, but the learner is not to receive an explanation of the individual words until he shall have carefully devoted five minutes to the pronunciation of the whole lesson.

10. The beginner must learn a very little at a time, because the greatest conflict is in the first stage. His only danger

arises from going too fast, and thus confusing the memory, spoiling the pronunciation, and impeding his own progress. If any *one* lesson be left unmastered, the system is virtually abandoned.

11. During the first fortnight, he should take three or more sittings a day at intervals of about six hours, and, however reluctant he may be to stop short, he should never exceed ten minutes at a time. Three sittings should be given to each lesson, and at least one of these should be with a teacher, for the sake of the pronunciation. But if a teacher be engaged for one hour a day, let that hour be divided into three sittings at equal intervals, which should be devoted to other pursuits.

12. So essential is fluency in every lesson, that the slightest hesitation in the use of a word in any one of the Variations absolutely disqualifies the learner from advancing to a new lesson.

13. As the English orthography, being exceedingly irregular, has the effect of misleading us very far from the true pronunciation of foreign words when presented in Roman characters, the learner should neither hear nor see the spelling of the lessons which he undertakes during the first three days; but the pronunciation and orthography of the French language being exceptionally difficult to Englishmen, this restriction may be advantageously extended to a week. The Manual should therefore be kept in the hands of the teacher, at first, and the English Variations should be copied out one lesson at a time on a separate paper, which the pupil should carry about with him for occasional practice in oral composition. When he begins to read, he should receive only one lesson at a time, and he should not see the second until he can write the first from memory with perfect accuracy.

14. It is an essential condition of the scheme that during the first fortnight the beginner shall not trust to his memory to reproduce, unassisted, what he has learned. Thus alone can he insure himself against its treachery. This policy is invaluable, because, while it secures the accurate recollection of every syllable, it fixes the words of each sentence in the memory in their true idiomatic sequence. The advantage of employing the memory frequently, for five minutes at a time, will be acknowledged by any one who will learn one stanza of poetry at a time, keeping the rest out of sight, and always refreshing the memory by first reading and then rehearsing those previously acquired. The work may generally be performed in two or three minutes, but the virtue of this process consists in the repetition of what has been already attained. The shortness of the tasks, and the facility with which the memory can deal with them when refreshed every two or three hours, will indicate the peculiar force which that faculty obtains by employing frequency, instead of close application, in learning combinations of foreign sounds.

15. The strictest economy of time and labour is attained by the limitation of the attention to one new lesson at a time; by the exclusion of all other words, except those previously acquired; and by the lightness of each new task imposed on the memory. The maximum of result is gained by the minimum of effort.

16. The beginner must invariably commence every sitting by hearing a foreigner read over the whole of the lessons previously acquired, or, if he works alone, by reading them himself.

17. After the first fortnight it will suffice to recite the six preceding sections and their Variations in each sitting, and to rehearse the rest once a day. The daily recitation of the prior lessons may be discontinued one by one; but the whole

of the previous work should be recapitulated at least thrice a week, and the primary sentences every day.

18. The power of the memory in retaining words coherently is so much smaller than is generally supposed, and that faculty is so completely paralyzed when an undue burden is laid upon it, that it is desirable the beginner should learn very few words at a time, and should neither hear nor see any others. It is well known that a beginner is under extreme difficulty when he goes to live amongst a people, of whose language he is wholly ignorant, but it is not generally understood that it is so great an impediment to his progress, that it would be much better for him to begin at home. The practice of learning words from day to-day, without retaining them in their proper combinations, and without the power of reproducing them with facility, is a farce which has been enacted long enough, and often enough. The power of the memory can only be ascertained by a series of experiments on an ascending scale. The descending scale is a mere waste of time; because confusion must be created by the failure of the first efforts. Short measured lessons (not exceeding ten minutes in length) afford the only means of accurately ascertaining the capacity of an individual to master a definite number of words in a definite number of minutes. The lessons ought to be so short, that it may reasonably be expected that the attention may be fully sustained from the beginning to the end. Unless experiments be conducted on this plan, no sound conclusions can be drawn with regard to the actual capacity of the individual. As no two persons have exactly the same degree of receptivity, experiments should be made separately by every beginner. There are four modes in which time is generally wasted. First, the materials placed before the beginner are too numerous to be retained by the memory; secondly, the practical is so much adulterated with the unpractical, that it is altogether vitiated thereby; thirdly, the attention is either distracted or exhausted; fourthly, recapitulation is neglected, because the be-

ginner receives credit for thoroughly knowing all that he has learned, whereas yesterday's lesson has partially escaped from his memory, and some of the preceding ones are entirely forgotten. From these causes it is probable that fifty minutes out of every hour are wasted, and it depends entirely on chance whether the other ten produce any good results. In this way alone can we account for the total discomfiture of many intelligent, studious men, in their attempts to learn modern languages.

19. This plan provides, that instead of trying to learn at least four times as much as the memory can retain, beginners shall bestow four times as much labor as is usually considered necessary for learning a lesson as short as those given in the Manuals. The necessity for gaining a good pronunciation justifies this injunction. In attempting to learn in a given time twice as much as the memory can retain, we lose the whole of our labor, because there is no positive acquisition, no Mastery; in attempting ten times as much, and in taking a series of such lessons, we only stultify ourselves. There need be no question as to what a beginner can do in excess of these lessons. The only question which arises is one of fact; namely, whether he has mastered all the preceding lessons before he begins a new one; for, if he has not done so, he has forsaken the appointed path. It requires great condescension and no small resolution to adhere strictly to these conditions for a fortnight, but success depends entirely upon a cheerful acquiescence in them, during that short course. Beginners will then be able to appreciate the system, and to form a just estimate of their own powers.

20. The rapid acquisition of a lesson is not taken into account in this system, but it provides for the perfect practical retention, by the memory, and for the fluent reproduction, of every sentence and every Variation which have been placed before the learner.

21. The primary sentences are so framed as to comprise in succession all those peculiar constructions which contrast most strongly with the forms of the learner's own language. The foreign Variations are designed to exhibit the several combinations in which the words may be employed. They show the constructions which are lying latent, not only in each individual sentence, but also in the combined sentences. The English versions explain these combinations, and give the various senses of each of the foreign words. Additional Variations may be framed and dictated by the teacher; but the beginner must not manufacture any for himself, and when he has written them in both languages, they will require careful revision by the teacher before they are brought into use. Equivalent English versions of the foreign Variations should also be introduced, containing synonymous words not previously used.

22. The daily lesson of a beginner should be about five Variations; but as there are many more deducible from each sentence, an intelligent teacher will not be content to pass over those which are obviously useful, as containing types of different constructions. The tendency of these additional exercises will be to give the pupil confidence in the system, when he sees the great variety of new combinations (each having a different meaning) which can be extracted from the sentences. As soon as he displays that critical caution which deters him from uttering any Variation which has not been framed by his teacher, whilst he exhibits perfect fluency in reciting those which have been delivered to him, it would be very advantageous for him to practise the oral translation into English of as many new Variations as the teacher can readily frame. These Variations ought to be written down, and the best of them should be kept for recapitulation; the English Variations being placed before the learner, in order that he may practice re-translating them into the foreign language. The latent Variations will amount, on a very moderate com-

putation, to three times the number put forth in the first three sentences, six times the number of those in the first six, and ten times as many as those in the first ten sentences, and so forth. The teacher, therefore, ought to have no difficulty in composing new Variations.

23. All references to grammar are interdicted, because every sentence, with its Variations, will be found to exemplify some of the rules of syntax, and to contain many inflections; and it will not require a great number of sentences to incorporate them all. The beginner's daily progress ought to be slow at first, but it will be sure, definite, and sound.

24. A merely theoretical knowledge of the foreign Variations, however thorough and scientific it may be, is useless for colloquial purposes, and the beginner must not delude himself with the idea that it will suffice to be able to translate with hesitation and deliberation. As beginners may entertain very different ideas regarding the rapidity of utterance expected from them, they should train themselves to recite their sentences as volubly and as smoothly as when engaged in the most animated conversation. A rapid speaker utters more than 300 words in a minute.

25. The searching test of fluency divides the foreign words which every one possesses into two classes, the known and the unknown. Hitherto it has not been the practice to treat words as unknown, merely because the learner cannot instantly throw them into their appropriate combinations when required; but this is an essential condition in the 'Mastery' scheme. This simple classification of words must be made with regard to the acquisitions of every one who wishes to obtain the Mastery of a language, which he has previously studied in the usual manner. He must find out what words he knows most thoroughly, and these should be interwoven, by a foreigner, into a suitable set of sentences and their Vari-

ations, wherewith the learner may practise oral composition several times a day. The practice of writing Exercises is very objectionable. The slow, deliberative manner in which English sentences are translated, word by word, into Latin, during a long course of years, forms a habit so hurtful to those who may afterwards have occasion to learn modern languages, that it creates a difficulty, in many instances insuperable, because they have come to the conclusion that they are quite incapable of putting words together in a modern language more readily or more correctly than they do in a language which they have carefully studied for many years. This conclusion, though apparently logical, is very unsound; because it is based on the assumption that the knowledge of grammar and the analysis of written language constitute the proper initiation. Fluency is not to be despised because it is unintellectual, nor is it to be disparaged as if it were an affectation of extreme cleverness in reciting what has just been committed to memory. In reality it is the power of habitually recomposing sentences with greater rapidity than we can utter them, and therefore it ought to be cultivated and prized, not as a faculty excellent in itself, but as a manifestation of that thorough command over foreign words, which, when accompanied by promptitude and accuracy, constitutes Mastery, and which can only be obtained by reiterations with frequency.

26. In this *frequency* lies the secret power of the system of nature, which all children pursue, whether in learning their own or foreign languages. Instinct impels them to echo and repeat, not continuously, but at short intervals, the first sentences which they have learned by rote, and gradually to interchange the words one by one. Although they pick up the sentences by chance, they invariably succeed in learning the language of those with whom they constantly associate. The frequent reiteration of all the sentences which they have mastered at the beginning, and the constant introduction of new words into them, produce variety and copiousness, whilst at

the same time they secure their perfect retention in idiomatic order.

27. Under the system here recommended, to learn by rote is to echo the sounds and tones of a foreigner's voice in uttering a short combination of words, reserving the analysis for a few minutes, and taking care neither to see nor to hear the spelling. English orthography is full of irregularities and anomalies, and our laws of accentuation and modulation, which have become habitual and, as it were, natural to us, assert their power with great force when foreign words have once been represented, even to the mind's eye, in Roman letters. As the reasoning powers are not required to aid us in imitating sounds, it is much more rational to dispense with than to employ symbols which, however useful they may be for ulterior purposes, form the greatest possible obstacles to our attainment of the intonation, the accents, and the cadences of a foreign language. We must set aside our accustomed pronunciation altogether, and the most effectual means for so doing is to learn by rote. As in learning poetry, we always recite every word and every syllable in their proper order, so it is only by the repetition of foreign words in their proper order that it is possible to learn to speak a language idiomatically. The treachery of the memory and the fugacity of words learned incoherently can only be corrected by recognizing the fact that, when words are learned by rote, they have a tenacity of cohesion which forms the basis of the power of speaking idiomatically.

28. This repetition of sentences and their Variations interspersed with new phrases and words, is the course followed by linguists, whether couriers or explorers, or amateurs; but the results are often extremely unsatisfactory, because there is no systematic selection of sentences, with a view to the progressive introduction of those constructions which have been omitted. The incorporation of the whole of the constructions

is a most essential principle of the 'Mastery' system. Without this, no method can be complete. Another cause of failure is, that they learn short phrases instead of long ones, either not knowing or ignoring the fact that the expansive power of sentences is in proportion to their length. Nevertheless, the Variations produced by the interchanges of words are so numerous that, however badly the sentences may be selected, nothing but perseverance is required to insure success; because, if they persist in learning new colloquial sentences from day to day, they must necessarily acquire the whole of the constructions in course of time. But it is mere childishness to commit to memory chance sentences, when we have it in our power to learn languages systematically, by selecting comprehensive and practical sentences, containing all the most difficult constructions, and mastering them one at a time. All that is common to the two languages, whether in words, or constructions, or idioms, is to be kept out of sight as much as possible. The frontier river between the two territories must be crossed, and the *structure* of the bridge commenced on the opposite shore, and none but foreign materials are to be employed.

29. There is a lamentable want of method observable in the learning of languages. It is obvious that those who wish to learn a language colloquially should commit to memory nothing but practical sentences adapted for immediate use. But generally boys are so trained, that their memory is overcharged with unmastered words and unpractical sentences, without order or coherence. There is nothing sufficiently definite and tangible for testing their proficiency with precision, and when they grow up to be teachers or learners of foreign languages, there seems to be nothing but a servile adherence to traditional routine. A remedy for this want of method may be obtained by fixing the number of sittings for each day, and the number of minutes on each occasion; the number of words in each lesson, and the number of its Varia-

tions. If the lessons allotted are so light that the beginner finds no difficulty in mastering them, the progress of the individual may first be ascertained and then regulated with precision.

30. One of the leading objects of this method is to prevent that confusion in the memory which invariably results from undertaking too much in any one lesson, whether in writing, in reading, or in learning by heart, and then jumbling it up with the succeeding lesson before it has been mastered. In dealing with foreign characters, writing of single words should precede the reading of books. The defective manner in which learners read foreign languages at the end of six months, is caused by their attempting to learn the whole alphabet at once, instead of dividing it into a definite number of lessons, to be learned very perfectly one by one. If at each step they will practise writing all the artificial words that can be made by arbitrarily transposing a few letters into all the Variations of which they are capable, their progress would be more sound and more rapid than it would be if they followed the usual course. They who can write the printed character from memory with facility will find no difficulty in reading it in books; and those who have mastered a sentence with the true pronunciation without seeing the letters, will not fail to pronounce it correctly, however strange and uncouth the orthography of the language may be when it is presented in the Roman character. Languages differ from each other more largely in regard to tones than to sounds, and there are not many languages which possess six sounds that do not exist in English. But as the latter may have some sounds which are not in use in the foreign language, it is very advisable that a beginner should acquire the habit of uttering each of his foreign lessons correctly before he sees or hears the orthography. It is equally necessary to guard the beginner against uttering sounds alien and unknown to the foreigner, on the one hand, and against neglecting to learn any one of the foreign sounds,

on the other. Orthography is not the basis of pronunciation.

31. Children living among foreigners *are said* to pick up languages unconsciously or insensibly, and the child's process is universally admitted to be the best. Hence it happens that many sensible men, not caring to think for themselves, and not knowing of any better plan, go abroad to learn foreign languages insensibly. In the hope of obtaining similar success, they wilfully surrender the exercise of their reasoning faculties, relying on the well-known fact that children and some adults, who learn foreign languages empirically, acquire them more expeditiously, and speak more idiomatically at the outset, than those who bring the greatest amount of intellectual power to bear upon the subject.

32. Children work by instinct, not by logical reasonings, nor by an intelligent observance of fixed principles of action; but yet they are always successful in learning to speak languages, even when totally unassisted, and therefore there must be some latent method pervading their procedure. The reiterated practice of oral composition, on the basis of a few sentences learned by rote, is the true source of their success. But that practice, when undertaken by adults, is generally conducted on wrong principles, so obstructive, that sometimes men of great capacity and industry, even when placed in the most advantageous circumstances, break down in the effort to compete with idlers of very inferior ability. They attempt too much, and they learn nothing thoroughly.

33. A boy eight or ten years old taken abroad learns two foreign languages at once without any assistance, and speaks them without confusion or hesitation, by practising oral composition on the right principle. He has not the power of concentration exhibited by a trained intellect, nor is it necessary that he should have it, because he attains his object by reiter-

ated efforts of memory, always fresh and always animated. He has no grammar, no books, no teacher ; but by diligently interchanging the words of each language separately, he effects a consolidation so complete that in each instance their cohesion is secured throughout all their several combinations. The adult who receives short sentences of four or five words each, together with many rules and their exceptions, and a great many terminations of words, without Mastering them, or even learning them perfectly, has no solid ground upon which he can stand, and therefore it is impossible for him to advance. Having been trained to make very short sentences, he puts three or four words together, and then comes to a full stop. He *studies* the language, but he does not *acquire* it, little dreaming that study conducted on such principles does more to obstruct than to promote the power of colloquial expression. The study of pictures will never make a man a painter, nor will the study of books make him a linguist. Something is required over and above study, but the difference between the study and the acquisition of a language is generally ignored ; nay, the study is blindly assumed to include the acquisition.

34. The 'Mastery' scheme provides for the thorough acquisition of a few sentences as a preliminary to the formal *study* of a language. It inducts beginners into a practical knowledge of the foreign constructions and a familiarity with some of the commonest words and some of the most useful forms of speech. It is not the child's process, because it prohibits the learner from receiving any other words than those which form each lesson, and from learning short sentences and unconnected words. These sources of confusion being removed, the beginner adopts the most valuable parts of the child's system, namely,—repetition, imitation, and interchanging of words, until perfect fluency is exhibited in reproducing all the combinations deduced therefrom.

35. The principle of exclusion here recommended may

seem to be at variance with the process of nature ; but as children confine their attention on a new sentence, in order to use it in conjunction with those which they have previously acquired, they virtually exclude all other words and phrases. The adult, who has been trained to the analysis of language, cannot restrain himself from the habit of learning single words, and of endeavouring to acquire many more than he can possibly retain in a connected form. Mis-remembered words can only be a source of obstruction and vexation to him, and therefore the principles of limitation and exclusion form a sound basis for the procedure of a beginner.

36. When a man who has studied a foreign language is unable to speak it, it is not his fault that he cannot express himself, but the fault of a system which does not inculcate the practice of oral composition. In fact, many years of study, unaccompanied by that exercise, *seem* rather to unfit than to qualify a man for speaking a foreign language. *Speaking* is nothing but oral composition, but *talking* implies also the power of understanding what is said by a foreigner, and of giving appropriate answers. Under the 'Mastery' system, speaking is to be attained before talking is attempted. This division of the labour renders it much more easy to a beginner, especially when he works under conditions by which he is not merely enabled, but actually constrained, to speak correctly in the narrow sphere of his attainments.

37. In common parlance, blundering is said to be inevitable for beginners, and even those who are well instructed in grammar look upon it as a necessary evil. Grammar is neither a corrective nor a preventive ; it only supplies materials and principles, but Mastery gives the power of using and applying them under restraints, which prevent the beginner from deviating from the right path. Beginners who learn rules and words, instead of sentences, must make many mistakes. The impossibility of speaking without blunders is accepted as a principle,

and even the best teachers encourage beginners rather to blunder than to neglect oral composition altogether. The possibility of learning nothing but idiomatic sentences, and of reproducing them with perfect fluency, is never entertained; and thus it is that the unclassical, unphilosophical notion, that we must blunder into correctness, is a doctrine almost universally received.

38. Beginners are generally led on from lesson to lesson as if the retentive power of the memory were absolutely unlimited. Rapidity in the acquisition of each lesson is popularly regarded as a high excellence, while thoroughness of retention is treated as a non-essential. As an imperfect recollection of words necessarily leads to an erroneous reproduction of them, the greatest caution must be observed in guarding against the overloading of the memory. The more words we attempt to learn in any given number of minutes the fewer shall we be able to retain, and the smaller the number of words the greater will be our success. Every new lesson we undertake, in addition to one which has been learned imperfectly, increases the confusion in the memory, and the difficulty in speaking, not merely in a twofold or threefold degree, but in a ratio rising to twenty or thirty fold.

39. The distinction between intellectual and verbal memory is not sufficiently considered by beginners. The durability of the impressions received in the one instance is in striking contrast with the evanescence of those received in the other. Words are but sounds, and the memory cannot retain them except by mechanical repetitions in the first instance, although intelligence presides over every operation. The action of the memory in regard to strange sounds is slow and feeble. The power of the intellect in understanding foreign words is greatly in excess of that of the memory in retaining and reproducing them. They cannot be correctly and consecutively reproduced except by a course of repetitions, and these are much

more effectively carried on at intervals than in one continued series. The Mastery from day to day, of ten words of a language altogether unknown, and widely differing from those he has studied, is far beyond the power of a person of average industry and capacity. This assertion may be easily verified or confuted by experiments honestly conducted for thirty days. The person who could master 300 words in a month might rival Mezzofanti. It is a question of the deepest significance in regard to the modes of procedure generally prevailing —whether a beginner ought to learn more words than he can retain or not, and whether the surplus can be beneficial to him or not; that is, whether his fluency in speaking a foreign language will be promoted or impeded by the possession of a stock of mis-remembered and half-forgotten words. The universal repugnance exhibited towards such experiments is no proof of the unsoundness of the conclusion drawn respecting the weakness of the memory; but if the Mastery system exposes that weakness, it also provides a remedy, by subdividing the time devoted to the daily labour into short sittings. Foreign words committed to memory are liable to be lost in two or three hours, when the attention has been wholly diverted from them to other pursuits. Lessons are thoroughly learned, correctly recited, but lost again on the same day. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be learned and recited cumulatively from day to day. Unless this be done, they must be learned over again, because the idiomatic coherence of the words has been lost, and they necessarily fall into disarray. If highly-educated men resent the conclusions drawn from the principles of restriction and exclusion, let them show some other valid reason why intellectual men are surpassed in the colloquial acquisition of languages by persons inferior to them in every other respect. All children acquire their mother-tongue, and all children living amongst foreigners learn to speak the foreign language. It is not a special gift, but a universal endowment, and therefore there can be no material inequality amongst individuals; much less can it be admitted

that a highly-trained intellect long employed in the study of difficult languages can be inferior in capacity to an untrained one. But it is very obvious, that a man carrying a heavy load of words cannot move forward so expeditiously as one who has only a handful.

40. The utterances of children in speaking foreign languages are never spoken of as compositions; but in reality this term is strictly applicable to their performances. There are many gradations, however, between their first successes in reproducing combinations verbatim and the power subsequently attained, as they grow up, of framing sentences adapted to every occasion with perfect readiness and decision. Reproduction leads gradually to the reconstruction of those sentences, the words of which have been interchanged with each other. Another step is the recomposition effected by employing a set of words in a form corresponding exactly with constructions previously mastered, but relating to subjects altogether different, and, of course, requiring the use of different words; with some phrases expressive of time, place, etc., interspersed. *Composition* properly so called is nothing more than the extension of the same command over a large vocabulary. Even in the best compositions there is a constant recurrence of the 200 commonest words, and no other constructions are used than those employed in conversation. Many of the finest speakers have acknowledged that their happiest efforts were to a large extent inspired by the *recollections* of the noble utterances of the great orators of past times. The gradations above mentioned have been followed unmethodically by all who have learned to speak foreign tongues idiomatically. Adults go through them without any suitable selection of phrases and sentences; they learn words incoherently; they confuse the memory by overloading it; they beguile themselves by their written compositions into the belief that they have made great advances into the language; and they take no cognisance of those principles which underlie the process of nature. Com-

position is not the compounding of sentences according to the prescriptions of the grammarian ; but it is the putting together of idiomatic phrases by intelligent efforts of memory. The true reason why learners for the most part cannot put foreign words into sentences is, that they have no foreign sentences to put them into. Whether in language or in music, composition originates in the reproduction of combinations previously received ; and in both, the constant practice of composition on right principles, accompanied by the study of the best models, is the surest road to success.

41. It has been remarked, that children reiterate their first sentences at short intervals all day long, but adults cannot attain equal success by numerous repetitions continuously carried on in one sitting. If a lesson requires thirty minutes in order to fix it in the memory, the time should be distributed, with equal intervals, throughout the whole day. At the outset, the most effectual division of the half-hour would be into six sittings of five minutes each ; but six efforts of ten minutes each would produce great results, being a nearer approach to the system of nature. This division of the work into many short sittings will recommend this system to handicraftsmen, to females in every grade of life, to idlers, and to all persons of desultory habits. Uninterrupted application being unnecessary and positively unfavorable, men of business may successfully adopt this plan, and take two or three lessons a day.

42. The wonderful instinct which prompts children to the adoption of practical sentences when living amongst foreigners and learning their languages is a subject which we need not discuss. We have only to follow it as closely as we can. It would be difficult to select half-a-dozen sentences which would be generally accepted as strictly practical, and therefore learners are recommended to substitute other nouns and other verbs, if they disapprove of those which are offered to them, provided always that they strictly adhere to the principles of this

scheme. Those who are going abroad to follow any particular pursuit will, of course, introduce the nouns and verbs which are specially required to enable them to converse on that subject. Such persons invariably obtain a success far beyond that of those who ambitiously aspire at the outset to the acquisition of the power of joining in general conversation. The former learn to use all the constructions with a limited number of nouns and verbs ; the latter have to acquire the whole language, and they try to learn it all at once.

43. The best linguists are those who habitually reproduce the foreign forms of expression most fluently and most abundantly. There is a prevalent impression, that the power of translating every vernacular form of speech is essential for a learner ; but, instead of employing beginners in this unwholesome exercise, it is better to adopt the converse of the proposition, and to lay it down as a law, that such translation shall not be permitted until the beginner shall have mastered all the most difficult foreign constructions. His oral composition is to be nothing more than the transfer of words from one sentence to another. When he can do this with facility, he obtains the power of rendering, in idiomatic form, every English phrase which may be expressible, either directly or indirectly, by means of those foreign sentences which he has mastered. Diversified English renderings of the foreign Variations must therefore be placed before him. The learner writes out the various English renderings, shuffles them, and practises with them, until he becomes so expert, that they instantly recall to his memory the foreign forms which they have been chosen to represent.

44. The chief difficulty felt by persons living amongst foreigners is to determine how to begin. That the beginning is the most distasteful and most difficult part of the work is clearly shown by the impatience with which it is generally hurried over. Adults cannot inflict (as children do) upon their friends,

whether foreigners or not, the wearisome repetitions of the phrases which they learn in the first few days. They may remedy that disadvantage, however, by practising in private every day, as often as they please, the translation of the English Variations of the sentences which they have learned by heart. They will thus make more rapid and sounder progress in the first few weeks than has ever been attained by any young person living in a foreign land in the same space of time. If the repetitions weary the beginner, it will be because he has not mastered them. Our colloquial speech is but a tissue of repetitions of 200 words, mixed up with a variety of nouns and verbs in a very limited number of constructions ; and, although we use those 200 words and those constructions incessantly, the repetitions are not irksome.

45. In the procedure of children living amongst foreigners idiomatic sentences are learned instinctively by rote. They show that they comprehend the significance of each combination, although they do not understand the meaning of the individual words. They analyze the sentences by degrees, without any teaching, and then transfer the words from one sentence to another. Their attention, in the first place, is devoted to the sounds ; and the idiomatic order of the words becomes fixed in the memory by frequent repetitions at intervals. They are neither mystified nor stupified by the orthography, and there is no reason why adults should not avail themselves of a similar exemption. For this purpose, reading and writing should be interdicted during the first stage of the learner's career. With regard to the English and French languages, it would be advisable that the learner should Master several lessons before meddling with the orthography. The best proof of the necessity for this rule will be afforded by asking an intelligent Frenchman, who knows nothing of English, to read aloud at least twenty lines of Shakspeare, or an Englishman, unacquainted with French, to read twenty lines of Molière, and then to write twenty lines more from dictation. Any one who

witnessed such a burlesque will admit the irrationality of trying to learn strange, unfamiliar tones by means of letters which habitually suggest different sounds.

46. In explaining the rationale of that process by which children eight or ten years of age acquire a foreign language, the beginner's attention has been drawn exclusively to their power of expressing themselves, and no reference has been made to their capacity for understanding what they hear. This method is a simplification of the natural process. It cuts it into two parts and leaves that which is universally admitted to be the easier of the two to be dealt with afterwards. Such a severance of the process prevents that confusion in the memory which overtakes men of the clearest intellect when they learn more words than they can retain ; when they prefer quantity to quality, and theory to practice ; and when they dream that they are engaged in a valuable exercise of their reasoning powers.

47. Objections will naturally be made to the arbitrary restriction of learners of all degrees to lessons not exceeding ten minutes in length. But it is a mere waste of time, and an impediment to progress, to work for an hour, and to attempt to learn six lessons at once. This would be equivalent to eating six meals at once, as a saving of time and trouble, without reference to health. Repletion of the memory is to be avoided above all things, and the best securities will be found in short exercises and fluency. The latter indicates a mental activity which affords the only reliable proof that there is no repletion. Thus it will be seen that one of the main principles of Mastery is self-mastery. Those who have never tested the retentive power of the memory by taking from three or four short measured lessons every day need not be affronted when they are told that they know nothing about it. In respect to a new system, it is not unreasonable to demand a fortnight's trial to be made. The learner should take a language quite

new to him, and sentences quite different in construction from those of his mother-tongue. In every method fluency at each step is implied and presumed; but it is not systematically enforced. There is no one at this present time engaged in learning a foreign language who will not admit that his memory is the victim of repletion. The bad effects of this condition are sometimes so calamitous that the disorder is fatal. In general, many weeks elapse before the evil is remedied. The memory becomes sluggish and torpid to such a degree that the feeling as of stupidity is intolerable. Persons ambitious of excelling, attempt too much, and therefore they incur greater danger than others of suffering from an overloaded memory. But a fine intellect will be found in practice to be of no disadvantage to a beginner, although there are many who maintain the paradox that languages are most easily acquired by persons of very humble capacity. It must be admitted that, during the mechanical process of learning a sentence by heart, the reasoning powers take no part in the work, and it is for this reason that the lessons are made very short—that urgency is recommended in the rapid reiteration of them—and that the learner is forbidden to tax his memory to reproduce them, until it has been refreshed by seeing or hearing them anew at the beginning of each sitting. If the learner will bestow ten minutes at a time on this unintellectual operation, he will gradually enter into possession of the foreign forms of expression, and they will become as natural to him as those of his own language. During the process of absorbing a lesson, the intellect may be said to be in a darkness, which is not dispelled until the lesson is mastered. This darkness is merely a confusion of the memory, and its duration and its intensity are exactly in proportion to the number of words attempted. A thoroughly intelligent knowledge of all the words and all the constructions of a sentence cannot be obtained until the operation of Mastery is in each instance *completed*. It is only by dealing with well-known words that promptitude can be added to fluency. Until promptitude is

gained, the intellect can take no interest in the work. The vivid action of the memory, when employed for a few minutes only, at intervals, not laboriously but lightly, enables the intellect to take its full part in the work. There can be no pleasure in it until the memory can recall the lesson without an effort, and therefore the lessons ought to be extremely short. This being generally unknown, thoroughness is neglected, and hence it happens that this pursuit is absolutely revolting to many persons who are highly capable of appreciating and enjoying it, when undertaken on rational principles. It is absolutely of no avail to learn the first lessons incompletely. And nothing less than perfect fluency will suffice to prove the learner's fitness for a new lesson. The darkness which is felt by the intellect in trying to deal with a combination of strange words and strange sounds is too palpable to be denied, but it is not impossible to escape from it altogether, by learning only three or four words at a time, and by frequently reperusing and rehearsing them.

48. In defence of the novel principle of beginning with complicated sentences as the foundation of a learner's knowledge, it is only necessary to observe that children employ such forms of speech as readily, as fluently, and as correctly, as professors do, and that it is not more difficult for a beginner to learn them by heart than it would be if the words were placed exactly in the English order. Idiomatic phrases familiarise him from the outset with forms of speech and modes of thought previously unknown to him, whereas those which correspond with the order of the words in his native tongue afford him no insight into the foreign language, and therefore only mislead him. It is strange that so obvious a truth has not met with general recognition. Many linguists, when asked to point out the most difficult constructions of any language they have learned, are unable to specify them. It is certainly more easy to acquire, and to use, a complicated form of speech with perfect correctness, than it is to reconcile it

with the rules of the grammar; and in most languages there will be found some constructions of this class, to which the grammarians themselves give conflicting interpretations; the proper course is for the beginner to Master them first, and to study them afterwards.

49. It is generally held that a beginner should pass from short sentences to long ones, and from simple constructions to difficult ones, and that each step so taken facilitates ulterior operations. This supposition, however, is erroneous, for it is very common to meet with persons who speak foreign languages with considerable facility, and yet go on blundering all their lives, for want of two or three important constructions which they have never been able to conquer. But when this process is reversed, it will be discovered that constructions which are called difficult, may readily be mastered in long sentences, when they are divided into very short lessons. These with the Variations encased in them, lead from a higher to a lower grade of difficulty, and the power of stringing words together in long sentences gives great confidence to a beginner, because it necessarily includes the power of composing short ones.

50. The various principles of connection whereby the several sections of a long sentence are united to each other should be carefully noted and practised, so that the learner may never be at a loss when he has to link them together into a long sentence. This power of concatenation, when once acquired, is never lost. It is one to which the beginner ought to aspire, and to which he may easily be guided by a teacher or a friend who will invent long English sentences for him, containing several dependent phrases, and composed of words which he has already mastered. That humble standard of very short sentences which indolent men are content to attain is a discredit to their classical education. The manuals afford specimens of all the modes of conjoining dependent phrases

into long periods ; and excellent practice may be obtained by taking two or three variations, altering a few of the words, and combining them into one connected sentence. There is nothing that affords more confidence to a beginner, when he first undertakes to converse with foreigners, than the consciousness of the power of expressing his ideas in sentences of the same length as those he employs in his native tongue, and that power is most effectually acquired by practising combinations of still greater length beforehand.

51. The colloquial power over a language is obtained by many individuals with so little effort that they wonder why they did not succeed much sooner, and why others do not gain it in a much shorter time. It is so easy, when once attained, that they feel as if the subject required no consideration on the one hand, or as if it had been thoroughly exhausted on the other ; but there are many youths living in our foreign dependencies to whom the colloquial knowledge of a language is of the highest importance, because their future career is often determined by the result of an examination, and they cannot afford to lose a single day by working according to a wrong method. A system is not to be considered good by reason of the ultimate success of those who have followed it ; for there is no method so bad that it cannot be corrected by practising oral composition with a few sentences until fluency supervenes. The merits of a colloquial system must be decided by its efficacy in securing definite daily progress *at the beginning*, not merely in words, but in the power of using them with facility in all those forms of construction which have been committed to memory as models, and as receptacles for new words. It may be said that colloquial practice forms a part of every system, but unless beginners are shown how to practise, it is impossible for them to do it without committing gross blunders. And unless their training has been extremely bad, they must be conscious of those blunders and greatly discouraged by them. In truth, it

is an insult to the understanding of an educated youth to be exhorted to practise doing that which he is conscious that he cannot do at all. He must have some instruments to work with, and the instruments must be good ones and suitable for the purpose. To talk is to use sentences, and therefore he must be put into full possession of some suitable ones for immediate use. Practice may then be commenced with every prospect of success, provided always that some reasonable restriction be imposed as to the scope and plan of his colloquial efforts. When a beginner has gone through a course of grammatical training, and is suddenly called upon to converse, without being shown how to make the proper beginning, his colloquial practice, in fact, forms no part of that system. In the instance of one who has been studying the classical languages it is a deviation, and, in fact, a total departure from it. The main object of this plan is to show, that by eliminating everything extraneous and obstructive, the Mastery of any language may be gradually obtained with a much smaller sacrifice of time and labour than is generally supposed to be necessary.

52. In this system technical grammar is excluded, because it confuses and obstructs the beginner by exhibiting, in an unconnected and disjointed form, words which may be learned much more pleasantly, intelligently, and effectively, in sentences. Hard words and puzzling rules afford him no assistance in gaining the colloquial power; but, after he has mastered two hundred words, he may study technical grammar with impunity for the rest of his natural life, and he may learn fifty words a day with impunity. The knowledge of technical grammar is not essential for those whose object it is to learn a language colloquially, because every sentence which they commit to memory, in accordance with this system, instructs them in grammar, pure and simple, leaving its scholastic robes to be assumed afterwards.

53. Although grammar is prohibited during this course, the plan on which the sentences are constructed is so comprehensive, that when the beginner has mastered them, he will find that he has already overcome all the chief difficulties of the syntax. But as he has also attained the habit of using idiomatic phraseology on a small scale, with great facility, his acquisitions place him on a far higher level than that of mere grammatical accuracy. The power of placing foreign words in that idiomatic order of arrangement which specially belongs to a complicated language, is one which is often found wanting in well-educated, clever men who have lived abroad for many years, and it is universally admitted to be the highest and most difficult attainment. It is often spoken of as a purely intellectual achievement, but in reality it is merely an exercise of the memory, which is performed successfully even by young children. When a sentence has been learned thoroughly, and has been repeated every day the words cleave together in their idiomatic order so adhesively, that the beginner, after a time, rehearses them without thinking about them. Other thoughts may pass through his mind while he is reciting a sentence, but they do not interrupt the smooth delivery of the words in the order in which he learned them, even when he has occasion to drop one word in order to insert another.

54. It cannot be too explicitly stated that a beginner who is desirous of making rapid progress must always carry about, in a compact form, the English versions of the Variations of the foreign sentences which he has already learned. Two or three minutes of practice, taken at intervals, will be of great value. Repetitions are indispensable, and the more they are distributed throughout the day the smaller will be the number required to engrave the lesson on the memory. The work is not an intellectual one, and no ingenuity can make it so, except by the addition of something extraneous to it. In testing a beginner's progress, the only trustworthy evidence is obtained by observing what he can perform. His performance in oral compo-

sition is the only point to be noticed. In conversing with a foreigner we do not benefit by what he says to us, but only by what we say to him. It is by the exercise of oral composition alone, that we advance to Mastery. It is useless to sit and listen to pronunciation without attempting to pronounce. The vocal organs must be actively used in imitation. The true intonation is not attainable by reading aloud to a teacher, who corrects one word at a time occasionally. The teacher himself should read aloud, and the learner should echo his tones in the utterance, going over each sentence three times. Fifteen minutes a day thus employed at the outset will produce better effect than fifteen hours of reading on the other plan. So, with sentences committed to memory, the active repetition of the Variations and interchanges of two or three hundred words will be far more beneficial than the mere committal to memory of a whole volume. Sentences are unwieldy logs of timber which must be cut up into planks to be utilised for ordinary purposes.

55. Mastery, as has been already stated, is not the identical process followed by children when they acquire the power of speaking a language, very dissimilar, perhaps, from their own in structure; it adopts the principles of imitation, repetition, variation, and frequency; but it introduces also exclusion and restriction as to time. Much less can Mastery be said to be the infantile process in which there is no method at all until the child begins to employ sentences, independently of feminine aid. It often happens that lads who have been carefully drilled for three or four years to translate English into French and German grammatically, are incapable of putting ten words together idiomatically until they go abroad. Then Nature, although previously excluded, resumes her ascendancy, and the youth speaks in a few months as well as any foreigner of his own age. But when he comes home, and has to undergo competitive examination, he is plucked, because he is found incapable of talking about words and constructions in technical

terms according to the school routine. Whether this delinquency is to be imputed to his incapacity or his negligence, or to the incompetency of his teachers to explain the mysteries of the grammar, can never be determined. A singular feature in the scheme of examinations is that the youth who has the power of speaking a foreign language idiomatically, is considered inferior in merit to those who have a thorough knowledge of grammar, without that power. Nevertheless, for all practical purposes, the former is incomparably the better linguist of the two ; and it is instructive to observe, that a sound, practical, colloquial command over a difficult language may be gained empirically, apart from, and independently of, a knowledge of grammar previously received, but not operating intelligently upon the mind. In many cases, it is evident that those who are skilled in grammar have only obtained the shadow of a language, not the substance, not the reality. Examinations in French and German, instead of Latin and Greek, have now been instituted to test the soundness of a boy's education, up to the age of 17. But those who have lived abroad deserve no credit whatever for speaking French and German as well as they speak English ; and the grammar of those two languages may be easily acquired under a competent crammer in the course of six months, in addition to the required minimum of other branches. These are very small results from a highly expensive education. But there are many who pass these examinations very creditably, without obtaining that colloquial power which, in reality, constitutes the accomplishment so much desired, and for which a knowledge of grammar is not an equivalent. The fact that a majority of youths decline to be examined in Latin and Greek after learning grammar for several years, proves at once the hollowness and the repulsiveness of that study as now conducted.

56. Mastery is the process of nature, simplified and cleared of all the encumbrances with which ingenuity has overlaid it. It is merely the power of doing what has been done

by every individual who has ever acquired the idiomatic command of a language since the race of man was called into existence; it is to gain the power of using all the constructions with a limited number of words in the first instance. The various courses pursued in endeavouring to obtain this object would exhibit innumerable diversities, if they could be discovered and recorded. Under whatever circumstances success may have been obtained, every person must have acquired gradually the power of using a few idiomatic forms of speech, and of interweaving the words so as to frame other sentences. The direct course, then, is to commit to memory, very perfectly, some useful sentences exemplifying the whole syntax, and this may be done as easily with a dead language as with a living one, although the course will be protracted in proportion to the number of inflections.

57. The development of a foreign language in the mind of a child living abroad has not been sufficiently noticed, whether with regard to his opulence of speech—to his employment of many words which have never been explained to him—to his command of the most difficult constructions—or to the power of using words in their genuine idiomatic order of arrangement. He speaks without hesitation or deliberation, and the foreign forms of expression appear to be quite as natural to him as those of his mother-tongue. Many adults live abroad for years, without ever attaining this power of expressing themselves *idiomatically*; and many teachers are staggered by their most advanced pupils' total incapacity in this respect. The failure arises solely from their not having committed idiomatic sentences to memory at first. These would counteract the tendency to translate the thoughts literally, in the barbarous manner which teachers so much deplore, and of which the pupils themselves are so much ashamed, that it often seals their lips. The study of grammar may enable them to speak grammatically, but it does not lead to the higher attainment of genuine idiomatic diction.

58. It is much to be regretted that no eminent linguists have communicated to the world the course of procedure which they followed in acquiring languages one after another. We meet with casual notices of rapid success in the attainment of difficult languages, but no one has distinctly recorded, in a systematic manner, what words he learned on each day, or the manner in which he contrived to put them together in accordance with the genius of the foreign language. But linguists are not the best teachers, and even Mezzofanti knew not how to teach himself Chinese. The possibility of learning in six months, by means of a systematic procedure, as much Latin as young persons acquire unsystematically of German, not having the sanction of experience, is naturally disputed, but the Mastery of an equal number of Latin words arranged in well-selected sentences would not be found impracticable. That rapid command and control over idiomatic forms of speech which is displayed by some youths who have visited Germany, results almost exclusively from the accidental attainment of complete sentences, followed up by a desultory, but constant, employment of them for all the ordinary purposes of life. A selection of comprehensive Latin sentences methodically committed to memory, on the principles of restriction and exclusion, would undoubtedly produce equal, if not greater, results. The first attempts at speaking must inevitably cause great embarrassment to those who have had no other practice than that of decomposing sentences; they are conscious that in every instance they *may* be wrong, and that in most instances they *must* be wrong. On the other hand, the confidence inspired by mastering the combinations which are true to grammar and idiom is so great, that beginners take pleasure in talking, and the language becomes rapidly developed within them.

59. A single sentence of about twenty words in length may be made the basis of the Mastery of any language into which the learner has been already initiated, if in the English version thereof the following changes be made *one by one*, for

the practice of oral translation. A masculine noun may be substituted for a feminine, or a neuter one; singulars may be changed into plurals; affirmative sentences may be changed into interrogatives, or imperatives, or negatives; any personal pronoun may be supplanted by a noun, with a possessive pronoun, or an adjective or both, attached to it; or by two nouns, one in the genitive case, either with or without adjectives. In like manner the latter forms may, in every instance, be substituted for the former; any verb also may be altered in its tense. In these Exercises, the Paradigm of the foreign language should be kept in constant use, as prescribed in paragraph 62. The words employed for the interchanges should be written down in order that they may be preserved for frequent use. In every instance, the foreign sentence must be committed to memory in the most thorough manner before the operations commence. The time devoted to each lesson should be short, and the repetitions frequent, and three or more lessons should be taken every day.

60. This system is constructed on a plan which differs so widely from the prevailing methods, that it is difficult for an educated man to approach it with an unbiassed mind. It sets at nought all the traditions of the grammar system, and so long as the reader adheres tenaciously to the maxims which formed the basis of his early education, this system, being inconsistent with them, will be adjudged to be irreconcilable with reason. But among those maxims, there are some fallacies which pass current because they are partially and conditionally true. Moreover, the German Manual is thus far in accordance with the views of the grammarian, that the words which he places before a beginner in the first instance, will be found arranged in these lessons *seriatim*. They are intermingled, however, with other words forming sentences comprising those specialities of the language which it is of the utmost importance that the learner should Master before he attempts to converse. But as these constructions necessarily

form part of the syntax, this plan brings the two ends of the grammar together, and combines the results for the benefit of the beginner. The fairest trial that can be given to the system is an experiment made by an educated man, who is *wholly unacquainted* with the German language, and who will be able to decide for himself, on perusal of the thirty Variations of the first sentence, whether it would be a waste of time to obtain the power of using those sentences with perfect facility, and pronouncing them with accuracy, in six days; and whether the results obtained are comparable in practical utility with the first thirty words in a German grammar. As he knows the difference between a mere translation and a free but fair rendering of the meaning of a foreign sentence, he need not allow himself to be shackled by his school training so far as to allow his progress to be arrested by a German construction, which may not be literally translatable, or which may not be in accordance with those models that he so highly prizes. He will not disdain to commit it to memory, and to employ it in the same manner as a German would, reserving the solution of any obliquities or ambiguities of the language for subsequent consideration and study. One who has made an experiment under these conditions is by far the most competent person to form a judgment as to the merits of this system. The German language from the nature of its structure is particularly well adapted for the explanation and exemplification of the system to an Englishman. On the other hand, the French language having many constructions identical with the English, neither illustrates its principles so fully, nor tests it so severely.

The great obstacle to the reception of a new system is the doctrine, that the study of the grammar is essential from the very beginning, and that it is also necessary for the learner to know a large number of words, and all terminations of all the declinable words, before he attempts to speak. Nothing can be more contrary to reason and experience than these notions. For if a beginner has learned a few useful idiomatic sentences very perfectly, and with a true pronunciation, and has used them

successfully among foreigners, he has practically confuted the doctrine. He has made a good beginning, and the most thorough scientific knowledge of grammar would not enable him to do better. We follow a very circuitous course when we begin with the study of a science, which, though collateral, is not essential.

61. Many have not imagination enough to conceive the practicability of the attainment of fluency and promptitude in the use of the first twenty-five foreign words, or of learning anything in a more thorough manner than that which now prevails. But a glance at the first six German lessons, which contain no more than twenty-five words, may perhaps convince them that it is practicable, under a system which restricts the beginner from learning a new lesson until he has mastered those which preceded it. The restraint imposed upon a beginner at first, however irksome it may be, is of a most salutary nature, because it enables him to reserve his strength. The rigorous restriction to one lesson a day during the first fortnight, although it may seem to curb a good memory with unnecessary severity, is designed to qualify the beginner to discover by actual experiment what may be his power of Mastery from day to day, when he works with a definite number of words for a definite number of minutes. But these restrictions do not last long, because after mastering the sentences contained in the Manual, all restrictions cease; and the learner may pursue his impetuous career with all that ardour which, when misapplied at the outset, is invariably the cause of disappointment and failure. It is time that the hallucinations regarding the power of grammar to enable a beginner to use the definite article correctly with nouns of different genders should be dispelled. For this purpose, one moment's consideration will suffice, and no argument is required. If the beginner can apply the article promptly and correctly to all the cases of four nouns of each gender, occurring in sentences arranged for this purpose, he has achieved what no grammar

ever taught anybody to accomplish. But no fault is to be found with the grammarian on this account, for he is not a teacher, but an expounder of a language, and he dismembers it in order to show the congruities and affinities of various words of various kinds. The German Manual enables the learner to overcome the difficulties arising from the genders by treating them separately, and thus preventing that confusion which must inevitably spring from the attempt to master them all at once. But it does not pretend to enable the learner to deal with a noun the gender of which is unknown to him. This is the Gordian knot which no hand can untie, and no sword can cut. Exceptions and irregularities must be encountered and overcome one by one, and if the learner has obtained the full command over the articles and adjectives by the practical application of them on a very limited scale, he will be able to deal successfully with every new noun as soon as he knows its gender.

62. After the beginner has mastered two hundred words, he may have recourse to a paradigm, showing at one view the whole of the terminations of all the variable parts of speech. This is not to be even looked at until two hundred words have been mastered. At that stage, it is to be employed by learners for the purpose of enabling them to change the termination of any declinable word into a *form* with which they have not been previously made acquainted. When the English version of one of those sentences which they have learned is read aloud, with a word changed, so as to involve an alteration of a case or a tense or a person, the corresponding form in the foreign language is to be sought for in the paradigm, and introduced into the foreign sentence. By practising rapidly in this manner, never taxing the memory, but always keeping the eye fixed on the paradigm, the whole of the terminations will gradually become quite familiar. This table ought not to be committed to memory in the form in which it stands; the omitted forms should rather be worked into new sentences, and committed to memory.

63. After this, the beginner may select easy sentences out of some agreeable English book, and translate them at sight, as rapidly as he can, passing over intractable phrases, omitting unknown words, and substituting for them others which he has mastered. He may lengthen short sentences, and abbreviate long ones at pleasure. Some of the sentences must be thrown into the interrogative, and some into the imperative form, and the length of the sentences which he makes for himself should be gradually increased. The Paradigm should be kept lying open before the learner for constant use ; and, as the exercise is to be carried on very rapidly, he must never pause to deliberate about any of the terminations, lest his memory betray him into an error. Three half-hours should be devoted to this exercise every day. But it may be most effectively carried on with the assistance of a teacher or a friend, and if that friend be also a learner, the co-operation will be eminently beneficial to both. Those who have laboured at any foreign language, whether ancient or modern, and who wish to acquire the power of speaking it, are recommended to try this exercise, with very frequent recapitulations, and to carry on the experiment for at least one month. They will thus enable themselves to use those foreign phrases which they may happen to have retained coherently in the memory ; but as there must necessarily be a large intermixture of Anglicised phrases in their compositions, the task of acquiring the *genuine* foreign phraseology will have to be undertaken afterwards. It is generally supposed that the practice of oral composition may be attained more effectually by conversing with foreigners ; but in reality much time is lost by that course, and it cannot be expeditiously accomplished unless the beginner takes the lead in the conversation, either monopolising it or securing the lion's share of it to himself. The learner should be assiduously prompted during these exercises, because everything should be done to facilitate, and nothing should be permitted to obstruct, his operations. As a variety, his friend may manufacture long colloquial sentences for him, to be translated section by section and recited

cumulatively. The first section should be taken from the latter part of a sentence. The recitation of each section in combination with those previously received will amount to something more than mere repetition, because a new section will in many cases involve an alteration of the constructions first employed. The following specimen is given as an illustration, the sections being recited in the order here specified: section 5; sections 4 and 5; 4, 5, 6; 3, 4, 5, 6; 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; 2, 3, 4, 5,

6, 7 ; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. He is not at home now, but | his son
2 8 4
tells me that | he will return to-morrow and | he will receive |
5 6 7
you and your friend | in the morning | at half-past 9 o'clock.
It is necessary to observe that sentences should be composed or
selected for a learner in which the words are familiar to him in
the foreign tongue. Twenty-four hours of actual bona fide work
conducted on this plan and judiciously distributed will suffice
in most cases to produce a degree of fluency and readiness
which will encourage the learner to carry on the operation
with vigour.

64. At this stage, the learner who is dealing with a language written and printed in foreign characters, may employ a native to read aloud to him every day, for half-an-hour at a time, from some interesting foreign book, simple in its style. Having before him another copy of the same work, and a translation thereof, he must examine each sentence carefully in English before the foreign version is read aloud. The object is to train his eye to the rapid recognition of the foreign words, *without stopping to trace the forms of the different letters.* They are to be pronounced as slowly or as rapidly as he requires, and he must echo the reader's voice in the utterance of each clause. In this process the eye, the ear, and the vocal organs are simultaneously and intelligently exercised. As soon as the learner can recognise the foreign characters with facility, the operation should be carried on rapidly and superfi-

cially, with frequent reiterations. Those who are engaged in public business abroad, and who employ their subordinates to read the correspondence aloud, may obtain in a few days the power of deciphering communications which appear at first sight to be wholly illegible, if they will be content daily to take very short lessons in the manner above described. The utility of this plan may seem questionable at first sight, but the eye cannot be trained in a more effectual manner. If English children were taught to read their own language in this manner, an enormous saving of time would be effected ; provided always that the lesson to be read should be extremely short, consisting perhaps of one line of poetry, previously committed to memory.

65. Until the learner has advanced to that stage in which hard work is exacted from him, he should always have a clue to the meaning of every passage placed before him. He should see a full translation of each sentence at first ; as he advances, the translation may be abbreviated until it gradually becomes a mere abstract. The same principle should then be gradually extended to longer sentences, then to short paragraphs, and then to long ones. Unless he knows the purport of what he is going to read, the task becomes uninteresting and discouraging. The main object should be to familiarize him with the language, and for this purpose every facility should be afforded at first, and very frequent recapitulations with incessant prompting should be adopted. If a beginner be carried on from page to page in the usual manner, without a full intelligent appreciation of what he reads, and without a frequent recalling thereof to his memory, he loses ground instead of gaining it ; he retains only a confused recollection of the phrases which he has translated, and he makes no approximation to that perfect familiarity on a small scale which this method is designed to impart.

66. When it becomes necessary to study a foreign lan-

guage in regular form and without assistance, the learner will find it hard to contend against the existing traditions in favour of the dictionary. The use of translations is universally denounced, but the proper manner of applying them has never been taken into consideration. A dictionary is quite unsuited for beginners, because the roots of words are unknown to them, and they are in most instances incapable of determining which of the several meanings given to a word is appropriate to the sentence with which they are dealing, and if they make a wrong selection it misleads them to a most pernicious extent. There is also a great deal of time wasted in turning over the leaves, and the attention is distracted by the sight of other words, and the intrusion of other ideas. On the other hand, translations not only give the right meaning for the individual words, but also for the whole sentence ; and, if sufficiently literal, for every clause which does not contain especial idiom. If the learner is supposed to be capable of working out fifty lines in an hour with the aid of the dictionary, let the same number of lines and the same time be assigned to him when he uses a translation, and let him carefully read the allotted passage over and over again, diligently comparing it with every clause of the translation, and marking any one which he does not comprehend, in order that the teacher may explain it. The translation of each sentence should be looked at first. When he approaches the foreign sentence or clause, he should carry the meaning of it with him. If, at the close of the sitting, he cannot translate the whole passage with much greater fluency than he ever before displayed, the same work should be repeated on the same plan on the following day, and a shorter passage should be given on the succeeding day. On every occasion all the preceding lessons should be translated by him. For if the requisite fluency be attained, there will be time enough for this in addition to each new lesson, and the passages first learned will soon become so familiar that at sight of the foreign book he will be able to read it off into English with great facility. It will be found after a month's trial that

a considerable exercise of judgment will be called forth by this exercise, and that the learner will become habituated to the foreign phrases more thoroughly than if he had studied in the ordinary manner.

67. After this training the learner may begin to converse with foreigners, and carry on the study of the language in whatever manner he may think fit; but, whether he meet with foreigners or not, the practice of oral composition should be carried on every day, and he should take care not to lose one word through neglect or disuse. In fact, whatever course the pupil may pursue, he must never neglect to work with the materials already in his possession. Speaking is nothing but oral composition, and it may be practised in private with greater advantage than in conversation with a stranger, or with a teacher who talks to him without due consideration for his limited knowledge of words. In general conversation many words are used with which he is not familiar, and although he may understand a great deal of what is said to him, he meets with constant interruptions, which baffle his efforts to make appropriate remarks and answers. It is obvious that there are three distinct modes by which oral composition may be practised. The beginner may take sentences from books, adapting them to his own purposes, or he may receive them from a friend, or he may translate the thoughts which suggest themselves to his own mind. Considering that he has always before him a written record of all the English words which he has learned to translate, there ought not to be any difficulty in arranging materials for the practice of oral composition. In this respect there is a lamentable deficiency of inventive power in the teachers of foreign languages, and this is the chief cause of the inability of their pupils to express themselves with freedom. The practice of making variations out of the sentences which abound in exercise-books is not in vogue; but the Mastery Scheme has this recommendation, that it utilises all sorts of lesson-books, and discards none but those in which the sen-

tences are too short, or those in which the foreign language is any way distorted.

68. There are so many points in which this system diverges from the prevailing routine that it is desirable to exhibit them at one view. Long and complicated sentences are substituted for short and simple ones, because the latter are contained in vast numbers in the former, because a difficult sentence may be learned as quickly as a simple one, and because there is infinitely more labour involved in constructing new sentences than in varying those that have been learned ready-made. Reading, writing, and grammar are interdicted at first because they form no part of the natural process, and because they produce confusion and delay. For slovenly hesitation of speech, fluency and readiness are substituted. Instead of translating from the English, the beginner has to learn the genuine foreign forms of speech, and to learn nothing else. To prevent the overcharging of the memory, very short lessons are prescribed ; the daily half-hour is split into three sittings, and the memory is aided at the beginning of each sitting by hearing or reading afresh all that has been previously learned. The daily acquisitions are sound and real, and the frequent repetitions secure them from being forgotten. Those repetitions, however, are not wearisome, because the lessons are learned perfectly, and the process becomes a pleasurable one. The pupil does not encounter any new words except those in the short lesson of the day, and his attention is not distracted, nor his intellect confused, nor his memory encumbered with words devoid of significant coherence. By refreshing his memory at the beginning of each lesson, he is secured from those incorrect rehearsals which interfere with the accuracy of the impressions left upon the memory. Long sittings are inappropriate and unnecessary, because the reasoning powers are not actively engaged ; because the operation is performed almost exclusively by the memory, and because short concentrated efforts produce much greater results than prolonged application. The exaction

of extreme fluency in the daily rehearsal of a series of lessons may be very distasteful, and the doctrine that the memory is so feeble that very few persons can master ten words a day will probably be repelled with indignation. The necessity for determining how many words can be mastered *from day to day* in a given number of minutes has been generally ignored; but this is a subject of the utmost importance to every individual. When foreign words are learned without any consideration for their retention by the memory, and when no comparison is instituted between the acquisitive and the retentive power, the latter is enormously overrated, and this is the universal cause of disappointment and failure. When the memory is once overcharged, all progress of the beginner is obstructed; but this fact is generally overlooked. The colloquial power is the fittest preparation for the study of a language, and it may be acquired at home as expeditiously and effectually as by going abroad. Amongst the traditions of our schools, the learning of ready-made sentences and the employment of translations of classical works are scouted, and the two most effective methods of dealing with oral and written language are very generally rejected as if they involved some moral turpitude. Another peculiarity of this system is that, whereas the English and French languages are both spelt in a very anomalous, uncouth manner, and are totally at variance with each other in respect to the manner in which they symbolise sounds, and whereas the pronunciation, intonation, and accentuation of the two peoples are widely different, beginners are forbidden to see or hear the spelling of sentences until they have mastered them. In the process of nature there is no spelling, and it is much more easy to imitate sounds when the mind is not engaged in futile attempts to reconcile them with incongruous spellings. The formal study of technical grammar is prohibited to the learner during his initiation, because it is unnatural, useless, and obstructive; but a practical, substantial knowledge of the constructions and of the inflections is informally imbibed. The principle of working from the known to the unknown is

generally followed in a very ill-considered, illogical manner by giving sentences which may be literally translated into the foreign language; but in this scheme a foreign sentence is used as the basis, and, when it has become perfectly *known*, through the medium of Mastery, the departure from the known to the unknown commences. The beginner is debarred from attempting to compose, either orally or in writing, in a foreign language, until some of its peculiar forms of construction have become fixed in his memory. Lastly, the law of numbers has been called in to prove that an incredible number of long sentences may be framed by means of a small stock of words arranged in selected sentences, by mastering which the beginner may obtain a fluent command of language. There is great economy of time and labour—the energies are not misdirected—and there is no waste of power.

69. The combination of solidity with brilliancy in the early career of our most distinguished literary men, has long been held to afford an undeniable proof that the method by which they learned Latin and Greek must be the most effective for the attainment of modern languages. This is a flagrant fallacy, but unfortunately the comprehensive nature of the classical programme has rendered it very difficult to discover what causes have led to the failure of the majority of those who are trained in our best schools. The closest scrutiny on the part of its adversaries has been unable to detect any flaw in the process, and although the results show that success is not the rule but the exception, the system is defended by a host of the ablest men in the country, and is therefore held to be a model. But there is evidently *something* wanting, and, judging *a priori*, it must be something extremely simple, because children have no difficulty in learning to speak *foreign* tongues, however complicated may be their structure. It must be something minute, for it has escaped the critical eye of experienced and accomplished teachers. It must also be something which, at first sight, is unpromising, because, even though it may have been

accidentally tried, it has been nowhere adopted. It must be something to the principle of which the traditions of the grammar-system, as now administered, must be hostile ; otherwise Mastery would have developed itself in individual instances. The Mastery system fulfils all these conditions, but yet it is quite in unison with all that is progressive in other systems. It is only opposed to what is anti-progressive, bewildering, and illusory. The mere learning of sentences, without variations of any kind, is of no use. On the contrary, it is necessary to practise the *variations* to such an extent that perfect facility and freedom shall be gradually acquired in using the words in a variety of combinations. The prevailing practice is founded upon the idea, that in order to remember sentences we must dismember them. Thus the sequences of words are lost, and the memory is loaded with unconnected words. But when the beginner learns complete sentences, as models, there is an established connection amongst all the words in his memory, and the unwonted exercise of reproducing them in their proper combinations calls forth a high degree of mental activity. Passive receptivity, which consists in the daily ocular recognition of words, year after year, is ineffectual, and the exercise of the memory in recalling disunited words is of little or no value, because they do not constitute language. There is a great tendency to despise easy lessons, and to aspire to the execution of difficult tasks ; to regard recapitulations as nothing more than unintellectual drudgery, and to be satisfied with the power of translation into the classical languages, with a tardy deliberation, which is quite at variance with the readiness and the cleverness so much extolled and prized in every other branch of the system. There is no reason why oral composition should not be conducted with the quickness and the fluency which are so much valued in other exercises. But the simplicity of this method ; the cumulative repetitions ; the provision for insuring the accurate recollection of every syllable ; and the minuteness which prescribes that long sentences shall be cut down into extremely short lessons, and that not more

than one word at a time shall be interchanged, are not in accordance with the hurry and the rivalry which prevail in our schools.

70. There may seem to be an inconsistency in prohibiting the study of grammar as an initiation, and yet at the same time setting forth works in which the substance of the grammar is avowedly and designedly conveyed to the beginner in a more efficacious and agreeable form. The vagueness of the manner in which the word grammar is generally employed is the cause of this apparent inconsistency. In one sense, the study of grammar is merely the learning of a number of technical terms to be applied to the analysis of language. The scientific application of technical terms is a valuable training for the intellect, except when it is prematurely exacted. In this system, grammar is communicated to beginners informally, without the aid of the grammarian, and without any technical terms. The study is left to be pursued in a formal manner afterwards. Theory is to be kept in the rear of practice, and never to be allowed even to keep pace with it, much less to overtake and precede it. In the following well-known passage—

. . . . fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipsa secandi,

all the words are double, and some of them are triple; there are at least twelve inflections; several rules of syntax are exemplified, and many technicalities are required to explain the first word. It would be impossible for any one to expound the rationale of these constructions without using technical terms, or mentioning any of the other forms of the Latin words. If this information cannot be imparted without technicalities, it is because grammar is a mere abstraction. No wonder, then, that it produces dire confusion in the minds of beginners, being conveyed in unintelligible phraseology. If, in one sense, scientific grammar is nothing more than the power of using technical terms in discussing the relations of

words to each other, Mastery, on the other hand, gives that thorough understanding of a sentence which is evidenced by the right appreciation, and the power of employing each of the words and phrases correctly. That power is exercised with reliance on models committed to memory so perfectly, that they become efficient substitutes for grammar rules; and it may obviously be acquired by degrees over the whole language without the aid of the grammarian. It is not unreasonable, therefore, that the beginner should be exempt from the learning of technical terms and rules. In the instruction of children, it is useless to generalise in technical terms. The ablative case has for its terminations *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, *is*, and *us*; but the nominative also has all these forms, besides several others. These two technical terms are not defined by the grammarian in such a manner as to render them intelligible to children, and the logical explanation of them and of the various rules relating to them will be found a task of no small magnitude, even by those who from long habit regard the meanings of those terms as self-evident. Two ablatives have a distinctive mark. If all had it, a child could easily apply the term 'ablative' on seeing that mark. He could apply the term, but not intelligently, because it involves significations inconsistent with one another, and is therefore inexplicable except to the mature intellect. It is true that the context will in some cases suffice to indicate the ablative, but only in some; and as beginners learn the cases in the grammar before they see or hear any sentences, it is impossible for them to obtain a correct idea of the term. In the process of nature, the peculiar powers of the words and the distinctive meanings of their terminations are learned from a series of *chance* sentences. There are some terminations grammatically interchangeable and frequently recurring, the correct knowledge of which is attained, not by analogy, but by learning them one at a time, by observation, and imitation. In the Mastery system, Variations of *chosen* sentences are given to the beginner with their translations, and the terminations are interchanged, and this

principle is applied to all the declinable parts of speech. It must be remembered that the beginner is not permitted to compose variations of the sentences which he has learned, and that colloquial Latin does not come within the scope of this method. Not only should this desecration of the language be strictly interdicted, but the learner should also be protected from the injurious effects resulting from his own crude efforts to write translations from English into Latin. Mastery is designed to give a free command over all the constructions of a language with a limited number of words. If a boy of fourteen were initiated by means of Mastery, and then led through a course of grammar, his power over the constructions, the cases, and the tenses, would at the end of two years place him on a par, with respect to Latin composition, with any of his contemporaries, and in oral composition he would far surpass them. He would also compete with them in the knowledge of technical grammar and in translating any Latin book previously unknown to both parties. If a sound knowledge of the Latin grammar can thus be attained through the instrumentality of a course of Latin composition, and if the theory can be obtained more effectually and more rapidly by the practice than the practice has hitherto been acquired by the theory; a great advance may be made both in the rapid acquisition and the scientific knowledge of Latin.

71. To give effect to this, six substantive nouns, masculine, singular, in *us*, may be included in one sentence; the nouns should be personal, and they should bear such a relation to each other, that any one of them may be transferred to any other part of the sentence, so that it may be used in all its six cases. In exercising the pupil with all their permutations it will suffice to employ only three or four of the nouns in each Variation, and to alter only one at a time. Feminine nouns in *a*, neuters in *um*, and the plurals of all 3 genders may severally be treated in similar form and in such order or succession as the teacher may choose. Six adjectives or pos-

sessive pronouns—rhyming with the substantives should gradually be mixed with them. The remaining six or eight words composing each sentence should be kept unaltered. The first and second persons of the verbs, both singular and plural, should be omitted at first, and the different tenses should be gradually introduced. Different rules of syntax relating to the general structure of the language should be exemplified in each sentence. The main object is to give the beginner exercises, by means of which he may be enabled to wield with facility a limited number of words in a variety of constructions, and gradually to learn all the declensions and conjugations. It is essential, whether for reading or for speaking a foreign language, to obtain at an early stage the habit of oral composition, because this is the fittest preparation for the study of the best authors, and because the longer it is postponed the more difficult it becomes. The strength of this process consists chiefly in the exaction of thoroughness every day in the exercise of oral composition, so regulated as to secure the reproduction of idiomatic forms of speech. It is applicable to every stage of progress and to every gradation of intellectual power; with this additional recommendation—that a beginner may master a set of Latin sentences as rapidly as one who has long been hammering at the language on the obstructive plans generally prevailing. The former has his memory unencumbered, and he has not contracted the injurious habit of translating English sentences *verbatim*. The latter has to contend against the difficulty arising from incoherent, vague, and confused ideas of genders, cases, and persons, declensions, conjugations, rules, and exceptions.

72. The elements of a foreign language are not, of themselves, the best initiation for a beginner; nor is it judicious to place before him, in abstruse technical terms, the rules which explain the principles upon which he is to use those elements in composition. Those rudiments of speech which are integral parts of sentences, and which form types of the various

constructions, are of much greater value than the elements. A rudiment may be a word or a phrase. It may be a verb; or a substantive with a preposition and an article; or an adjective, or both; or it may be a nominative, with its verb; or it may be a noun in the nominative, attended by one in the genitive, with or without adjectives; or it may be a short parenthetical expression. When the beginner has a number of these types firmly fixed in his memory, the words being arranged in their proper forms and collocations, he transfers them from one sentence to another with great facility and accuracy. In an inflected language each rudiment contains some of its elements and its principles, and the learner gradually acquires the power of using them in the most practical form. The Mastery of any one difficult language, on a small scale, will not only qualify, but will also stimulate the learner to apply the scheme to other languages; and if the conditions be carefully observed, this will be a most useful and interesting process of Self-Instruction. On the other hand, the failures resulting from learning the elements, and lists of words, prove to demonstration that that arrangement is the most obstructive course which ill-directed ingenuity has ever devised.

73. The grammar-training is not so much an exercise of the reasoning faculties as an exercise of the Memory in the recognition of a great number of words, many of which have various meanings—in the recollection and application of technical terms of Latin origin, composite in their construction, and in many instances incapable of conveying, even to the mature intellect, the abstruse ideas which they are intended to express—in the recitation of many rules, having exceptions and qualifications which in modern word-craft are said to prove them; but which in reality disprove and nullify them—and in the discrimination of the powers of a great number of terminations, one of which has the following remarkable properties.—In quantity it is both long and short; it represents masculine, feminine, neuter, common and epicene; singular, plural; nom-

inative, genitive, dative, vocative, and ablative. It appears in the indicative, the subjunctive, the active, the passive, the participle, the adverb, the substantive, the adjective, the conjunction, the pronoun, and the *article*! It is needless to say, that nothing but confusion can result from the incessant study of a series of complications of this nature, unless some practical plan be adopted by means of which a pupil may very gradually attain a thorough command over them, and thus relieve the overburdened memory, and enable it to work with freedom. The train of thought generally prevailing on the subject of grammar is this: Grammar is defined to be correctness or propriety of speech.—It is absurd to speak a language without correctness, therefore grammar must be learned in the first instance. But if any part of the grammar be left unlearned, correctness is unattainable, and therefore a complete course of grammar is a necessary preliminary to the acquisition of a language. The grammar must necessarily be perfect; that is, it must contain all the forms and inflections, regular and irregular, of all the declinable words in the language, and the learner, of course, must have a perfect recollection of them all, and a keen discrimination of the special applicability of each form and of each term. Such is the modest programme which has been handed down from generation to generation, and which is held to be almost sacred among us. But the results of the grammar system have been declared by a competent tribunal to be so meagre, that an enormous majority of the boys educated in our public schools know nothing of the Latin language, and are grossly ignorant of its grammar. The consequence is that a new grammar has been constructed containing additional technicalities, and therefore still less intelligible than the old one; and it now only remains to be seen whether the proportion of good scholars turned out of our public schools will be the same as before, or whether they will form a *majority* as startling as the *minority* in which they now figure. The moral and physical training of the boys in our Public Schools is most admirable, and their teachers are deservedly commended on that

account. But when we observe the *results* of the method of teaching Latin and Greek, it is evident that the established mode of instruction is altogether unsound; and it is a wonder how the Commissioners could have escaped from that conclusion. When an individual obtains a high degree of success in acquiring a modern language, he is credited with having a special faculty for that pursuit, and no merit is imputed to the system which he has followed. But on the other hand, when men of exceptionally high classical attainments are spoken of, there are thousands of voices uplifted to extol that antiquated system, in spite of which they have gained their eminence, and which is now bolstered up only by the renown of their manly, self-sustained exertions. A system ought not to be judged by exceptional instances of excellence, because they prove nothing; and it would be not less fair to exhibit the performances of the three lowest boys in each form than to parade those of the first three as a sample of the average attainment of each class. Amongst the majority we search in vain for the very germs of that critical accuracy which it is the pride of the classical system to bestow, and it is impossible to deny the inference that they have been crushed by that ponderous, unwieldy method. For the welfare of the rising generation, and for the benefit of the whole country, it is to be earnestly desired that the method of instruction should be renovated, so that boys of ordinary capacity may be enabled to attain that degree of scholarship which is now obtained only by a small minority, and that the latter should rise to a higher degree of proficiency.

74. No definition of the term 'grammar' enables us to understand why that science should be studied first. It is quite certain that, in practice, multitudes of persons who have been well instructed in grammar are wholly incapable of composing Latin sentences without infringing the laws of syntax. The best method must be that which communicates to the learner the power of composing correctly; because in doing so he necessarily fulfils all the conditions required by the

grammar. To commit the minor parts of speech to memory disjointedly, while the verbs are left untouched, is not a step in advance on the way to the composition of sentences; nor can the study of the detached portions of a language conduce to the desired results. It is obvious, therefore, that the grammar is not the fittest introduction to a language. A grammar is undoubtedly of the highest value as a book of reference. It is not customary to commit books of reference to memory, but the wisdom of our ancestors prescribed this course, and we know the result. Grammar has been over-estimated and exalted to a false eminence, and one who is well versed in grammar is, by a fiction, reputed to be well acquainted with the language. It may be objected that the acquisition of Latin by a more expeditious and more effective method will defeat one main object of the classical system by relieving the beginner from some years of hard labour in solving the puzzles of the grammar. But in truth, time is of more value than grammar, and there will still be difficulty enough in comprehending the mysteries of the technicalities, and applying them in the construction and *destruction* of sentences with a thorough intelligent appreciation of their meaning.

75. The fluency which can only be obtained by short lessons and very frequent repetitions is never contemplated by those who have the fixed idea that, when the words of a lesson are once *understood*, nothing remains to be done but to proceed to learn another. Even in learning spoken languages, the necessity for having a few chosen sentences always ready on the tip of the tongue is not generally recognised. Fluency is regarded as a result which can only be obtained, as it were, by contagion in their intercourse with foreigners. No argument is necessary to show that a person who cannot employ a few words with freedom cannot possibly employ a greater number. But this self-evident proposition meets with a most unfavourable reception. Men protest against practising that which they conceive they know quite perfectly, having no

suspicion that their ideas of perfect knowledge are eminently delusive. The facile collocation of words must have a beginning, and must be gradual, and the greater the number of words which they learn incoherently the greater will be the difficulties against which they will have to contend. Nor do they even benefit by the words which they have retained coherently in passages culled from poets and orators, because they are incapable of recalling at will, and disconnecting from them, those phrases which they require in oral composition. From this consideration it is evident, that the neglect of oral composition is the only impediment to their gradually obtaining facility and fluency in constructing sentences, with the same elegance and force which are displayed in their written compositions. It is not worthy of the scholar to depreciate the fluency which he has not attained. He can write Latin with facility, and if he cannot orally compose with fluency, it is only because he has never tried ; and he never tries, because he does not know that there is a path which will lead him infallibly to success.

76. The Mastery system imparts to the beginner something far better than the bare rationale of the composition of sentences ; it gives him the power of using all the constructions of a new language with facility through the medium of the sentences which he has learned. The number of constructions is small, even in a copious language, and the power of using all of these aright is in effect the power of speaking the whole language. Grammar is a scientific exposition of the principles of the relations of words to each other in technical terms invented for that purpose, and which being applicable to no other, are incapable of being explained by analogy. It deduces from the language a code of laws which it declares to be edicts which govern the language. But these edicts and the reasonings founded upon them, being artificial and extraneous, are merely obstructive to a beginner, while he is grappling with the natural difficulties which beset him. It is

manifest that there is no form of speech that can be held forth as the natural or necessary beginning of a language. But whether it be an ancient or a modern one, the Mastery of sentences is the true beginning, because it imparts a thorough knowledge of the inflections and constructions. Any sentence may be taken as a starting point, and all the rest of the language may be gradually and methodically added to it. Nature does not prefer one part of speech to another; but all are equally necessary. Nouns preponderate in number over all the other parts of speech put together. It is for this reason perhaps that teachers give beginners in the first week a number of nouns altogether disproportionate to their power of using them. Language has been held to be divisible into two parts—nouns substantive, or the things spoken of, on the one hand; and all the other parts of speech in their appropriate constructions, on the other. The latter constitute the more important acquisition for a beginner, whose object should be to obtain the full power of colloquial expression with a few nouns, and to superadd the rest at leisure. Justice should be done to the nouns by taking a few specimens of each class, and transferring them from one sentence to another. At the same time, the beginner should be exempt from the injustice of having his memory crowded with a superfluity of nouns. The power of transferring nouns from one sentence to another is attainable without any assistance from the grammarian, or from the science of grammar; and it is a mere abuse of terms to say that a person is ignorant of grammar because he is ignorant, for instance, of the gender of some uncommon irregular noun, which he has never met with before, and which is not to be found in the grammar. This is the phantom which scares even good scholars when they attempt oral composition in Latin and Greek. When a grammar contains all the anomalies and irregularities of a language, it stands to reason, that no man can avoid infringing the laws of what is called the grammar until he has attained a perfect knowledge of the language. But everything must have a beginning, and those

who idly wait until they can compose perfectly never succeed. Men may feel ashamed of their first attempts, but the fault is not theirs. In all reason, the blame should be imputed to incompetent teachers and an unsound system. But the remedy is very easy ; for if they will practise oral composition in private for a quarter of an hour at a time, all their stagnant words will soon begin to flow. They have merely to translate a few lines of an English book into Latin or Greek, and then to rehearse the same sentence at least twenty times, recapitulating on each new occasion all the preceding lessons. It is not to be a laboured performance, the lessons should be very short, and the work very light and easy. Before thirty such exercises have been taken, fluency and promptitude will be partially developed, and satisfaction will be derived from the daily increasing facility in giving improved versions of the same passages. Those who are not scholars may pursue the same course, selecting their sentences from a translation of a classical author, and towards the end of each lesson committing the original passage to memory, instead of their own imperfect compositions, writing them out consecutively, but separately, in both languages, rehearsing them every day, reading them before each rehearsal, and then translating the English sentences into the foreign tongue, with a daily addition of twenty or thirty Variations obtained from a competent person. As this system only provides for an initiation, the Exercise here recommended is only designed for those who, in respect to their power of oral composition, are still in their infancy.

77. But it is not merely while we are under tuition, that oral composition is deemed impossible, for even professed scholars exhibit the greatest repugnance to that exercise of their faculties. When prose composition is founded upon an unpractical knowledge of the grammar, that is, upon imperfect recollections of the theory of the constructions, and of a large stock of words, of their inflections and of their special powers, we have no right to expect that the performance will be satis-

factory. Mastery is founded upon a definite knowledge, and a very thorough recollection of difficult sentences, in which the words are transposed and re-arranged in such a manner, that the beginner obtains a clear conception of the force of each construction, and of the special powers of the words ; and proves it by inserting new words, and framing other sentences in accordance with the models committed to memory. He works on a very small scale at first, but his progress is sure and sound, and therefore, small as the beginning may be, it is not to be despised. Oral composition may be commenced with advantage at any stage of a learner's career, and if the experiment be fairly tried, it will be discovered that there is nothing illogical in the conclusion—that those who, after seven or eight years of study, are unable to write Latin grammatically, are quite capable of gradually attaining fluency and correctness in oral composition. The attempt to grasp all the constructions, all the exceptions, and all the inflections in all their varieties of gender, number, and person, without any practical application thereof, has proved a failure. The theory takes no hold of the memory ; the practice is so desultory, so extensive in its range of words, and so defective in respect to concentration, that no facility is attained even in the deliberative process of writing exercises ; the practice of oral composition, which is the most vitally essential part, is wholly neglected, and the residuum is mere word-craft. Oral composition, when rightly conducted, has this advantage over written exercises—that six or eight times as much work can be done in one lesson ; and, as this scheme requires that all that is learned shall be retained by recapitulation, a great saving of time will be effected by adopting it.

78. The critical study of the matchless literature of Greece and Rome through the medium of technical grammar must always be an essential part of our educational course. But this fact does not touch the argument in favour of Mastering many of the difficult constructions of those languages, before the

study of grammar is commenced. In some instances, the study of grammar confuses the memory and bewilders the judgment beyond all remedy. The grammar is always learned by rote, in the truly obnoxious sense ; that is, without any clear understanding of the rules and the technical terms. The consequence is, that obscurity and uncertainty perplex the mind, even with relation to those examples, the principles of which seem to be understood. Some of those principles are truths so simple that it is almost impossible to explain them, so subtle that they cannot be analyzed, and yet so obvious that they require no explanation. A child speaking a foreign tongue uses sentences in harmony with those principles, not by profundity or subtlety but merely by the exercise of his memory and his imitative powers. There is no philosophical application of principles in his performance, but yet the principles are applied as perfectly as when a philosopher uses the same forms of speech. The grammarian embodies those principles in concise rules, abounding with technical terms. They are thus rendered so obscure that they are avowedly unintelligible, as may be seen in the preface to the New Primer. But the daily study of the unintelligible is considered so wholesome for the development of the intellectual powers, that the system has been stamped with the approbation of the best scholars and has become an institution.

79. We never hear of the Mastery of Greek or Latin, even on a small scale, in any of our schools, because the grammar system does not sanction the practice of oral composition. The memory may be stored with select passages from the best authors, and the power of introducing choice phrases into written translations may be abundantly manifested. But, unfortunately, it is deemed visionary to expect that that facility can be matured into fluency in oral composition, without sacrificing the quality of the performance. It is also held to be impossible to master one by one the most difficult constructions and likewise to retain and increase that power by varied recapitu-

lations every bay. Nevertheless, it may be easily accomplished, provided that the learner be restricted to a limited number of familiar words. An unfamiliar word, unless he has it placed before him at the moment it is wanted, will have no other effect than that of confusing his memory and obstructing his fluency. During the practice of composition, there should be no loitering for the purpose of recalling some word or phrase which does not rise to the lips at the moment it is wanted, but he should pass on to the next sentence, so that there may be a continuous flow of words as long as the exercise lasts. On repeating the same exercise, many of the missing words will be forthcoming, and an improved version will be the result in every subsequent repetition. Fluency must of necessity commence on a small scale, and a sufficiency of words is better than a superabundance.

80. It is not because some youths become ripe scholars after a long study of grammar, that the credit should be given to the grammar training. Grammar has been styled the logic of speech, and it is the fashion to ascribe the brilliant success of our most eminent literary men to an inspiration drawn from that pure and sparkling fountain, the old Eton Latin Grammar. But 'post hoc, propter hoc' is proverbially a very bad specimen of logical reasoning, and the successes of those who have struggled through the morass of grammar, and have afterwards emerged and entered upon a course of which self-instruction is the most prominent and distinctive characteristic, must be attributed to their own independent exertions. While preparing for their examinations, they read Latin authors more extensively and cursorily, assisted, in many instances, by translations, and thus they become more thoroughly familiar with the principles and the constructions of the language, and acquire greater facility in understanding the meaning of the authors. On the other hand, those who do not enter upon a more enlarged course, close their school career with a very sufficient knowledge of grammar, and a very insignificant amount of Latin ; they

never emerge from the morass and they never obtain a footing on *terra firma*. But as they are supposed to be well versed in the logic of speech, their education is considered complete.

81. The grammar system dissects a sentence, and severs the coherence of the words by picking out each noun, pronoun, etc. to be declined, and each verb to be conjugated ; and thus, their connection is established with the grammar, instead of with the language. The Mastery system imparts to the pupil the whole contents of the grammar without adhering to any specific arrangement of the items. When variations of Latin sentences cannot be obtained, interchangeable words must be resorted to at first. In a twenty-worded sentence, there will generally be found several interchangeable words or phrases. But the attention ought to be directed particularly to those in which some speciality of construction is involved. In every instance the English sentence is to be written out in full, with the interchangeable words bracketed together. When they are Mastered, but not till then, a new sentence may be undertaken, but the first must be repeated with it, and so with every succeeding lesson for a time, in order that nothing may be lost for want of recapitulation.

82. There is no novelty in the plan of learning a little at a time very thoroughly ; but, in this scheme, *extremely* short lessons are to be learned in the *most perfect manner*, and in the most practical, comprehensive form. The labour now bestowed upon the grammar course is admitted to be altogether disproportionate to the results obtained ; it is argued, however, that if boys were properly grounded before being sent to school, there would not be so much time wasted. The learning of grammar can be of no use to inattentive and reluctant pupils as a *training of the intellect*. Technical grammar being neither intelligible nor practical is totally unsuitable for those who have not been prepared for it. And therefore it is contended that they must obtain a familiar acquaintance with,

and command over, the constructions of the language, in order to enable them to understand the grammar.

83. The remark that in practice quantity *seems* very generally to be preferred to quality, is founded upon the fact, that a youth who goes up to be examined in any Latin author is generally incapable of reading it off into English, either with fluency and pleasure to himself or with satisfaction to his auditory. He has not that thoroughness of knowledge which he might have attained if his attention had been restricted to a much smaller portion of the work. The practice of making a pupil translate familiar passages of Latin read aloud to him, would afford still better evidence of his thorough knowledge of the work done. Such an exercise might be carried on for a few minutes every day concurrently with any other system, and without any detriment to it. The result would be, that he would recognise those constructions and those words much more readily when he met with them in his subsequent studies ; and as soon as this result manifested itself, the length of the regular lessons might be gradually reduced, and more time given to this exercise.

84. On the subject of construing, Cicero has inadvertently dropped a notable remark: ‘*Navem aut sedificium idem destruit, facillime qui construxit.*’ And we find from experience that boys who have diligently practised ‘construing,’ acquire great facility in mangling Latin. In the word craft of our schools, the art of demolition is called ‘construing,’ and we are led to believe that it imparts to us the power of composition in an artistic manner proportionately to the excellence of the works demolished. But the power of orally constructing Latin sentences is higher and greater than that of merely translating Latin into the vernacular tongue ; nay, it actually includes that power in a degree proportionate to the learner’s knowledge of words and constructions. On this ground, it ought to be practised more frequently than translating into

English, or it deserves, at all events, to be placed on a par with it. The flaw in our school system is, that we are always engaged in the decomposition of sentences instead of practising oral composition. The latter stands in the same relation to written composition that mental arithmetic does to slate-work in the schoolroom. It is impossible that time can be misspent in oral composition, founded upon the best models, because it is the soundest and most searching test of that thorough knowledge of the niceties and peculiarities of a language which is the chief constituent of elegant scholarship.

85. In days long gone by, the Briton had a good reputation for scholarship on the Continent, because oral composition was practised in our schools. But when school-books were printed with the Latin words mis-arranged in the English order, a very vicious principle was introduced; our scholarship ebbed away, and our false pronunciation was put forward as an excuse for our inability to *talk* in Latin. Our intercourse with foreign scholars ceased, and it was found convenient, as a saving of time and trouble, to dispense with the continental mode of utterance, and to teach little boys to pronounce Latin like English. Since that time, we have pronounced Latin unintelligibly, and the practice of speaking it has been entirely discontinued as a part of our education. The readiest, the soundest, and the most unimpeachable proof of scholarship, consists in the flow of elegant Latin diction; but this is a distinction which we are now content to forego, in favour of a standard of a far inferior order of merit.

86. The objection that it is impossible to speak Latin unless we hear it spoken by others is too childish to require confutation. Some teachers maintain that it is useless to learn to *speak*, and that it is highly prejudicial to practise *talking*, in Latin. But oral composition is absolutely necessary to make a man a complete scholar. Every one who finds himself in company with foreigners, discussing any important subject

in Latin, must feel the incompleteness of his own scholarship unless he can take part in the conversation. Our false pronunciation of Latin ought not to be a hindrance to any one so situated, because, if he will occasionally read Latin with a foreigner for half an hour at a time, echoing his voice in the utterance of each clause, he will very soon acquire the habit of pronouncing it so as to be intelligible to the people of that nation to which the foreigner belongs.

87. For a hundred years past, the unlearned have been pondering and puzzling themselves to find out why youths cannot speak Latin and other languages after learning the grammar very thoroughly, writing translations very industriously, carefully studying the best authors, and largely committing to memory specimens of the best styles of writing. Thus qualified, they seem to be armed at all points. But unapplied knowledge is useless. It must be made available by active exercise of the memory under certain conditions, the principal of which is, that unknown words shall be excluded, and that the beginner shall practise the translation of the English versions of those passages which he has learned by heart, with the words and phrases copiously interchanged. These interchanges may be made by removing whole clauses, or phrases, or words from one sentence to another without involving a change of the cases or the tenses. The power of wielding sentences in which the cases and tenses are altered must be acquired afterwards slowly and gradually. Many a sentence committed to memory will be found, on examination, to be full of useful and choice Variations. But hitherto teachers have not been in the habit of analysing sentences for the purpose of extracting Variations for the benefit of the learner; the sentences are mere lumber in the memory, and the effort to translate the Variations at sight, on the part of one who is unprepared by practice, is utterly fruitless. When experiments are made in the manner above suggested, the learner should practise alone, unless he can persuade a friend to trans-

late sentence by sentence alternately with him, and thus to subject his own performances to criticism.

88. It is very desirable that Latin and Greek should be rescued from the odium they now incur, in consequence of the tedious and harassing study of grammar. The study of Latin and Greek is inexhaustible, but if the initiation by a more summary, but not less critical, method than the learning of technical grammar, should leave a little time unoccupied, the acquisition of other languages might be superadded on a small scale. The principles on which Latin, Greek, and other European languages are constructed, are so widely different from those of other classes, that youths who go abroad to distant regions, having too much faith in those principles of grammar which they conceive to be universal, unimpeachable, and all-embracing, are greatly discouraged and impeded. Some acquaintance with the specialties of the Sclavonian and other languages not generally studied, would be of the highest advantage in giving more comprehensive views of grammar to those who aspire to be general linguists. This knowledge may be attained, either by the Mastery of a few sentences, comprising those specialties, or else by expositions of them, so conducted as to exhibit their peculiarities and anomalies in the most instructive manner.

89. Mastery is a protest against the practice of learning many words incoherently, and when they are forgotten, learning them over and over again for months and years in succession. The obvious remedy for obliviousness is, to learn very short lessons, and to provide for their retention by frequent daily repetitions. This course is not followed in the existing systems, but there is nothing to prevent its adoption by learners at any stage of their career. Instead of imparting a knowledge of grammar in the abstract, and then analysing sentences and referring every construction and every word to the rules committed to memory, this method employs sentences

as vehicles for the practical knowledge, not merely of words, but also of the principles on which sentences are constructed. When illiterate persons utter long and correct sentences, they unconsciously conform to the rules of grammar; and when a child is taken abroad, he contrives without the aid even of an interpreter to select from an unknown tongue and to employ practical sentences; it is evident, therefore, that language has a power of revealing itself and explaining itself by inference to those who learn it by the natural process. It is by inferences drawn from spoken sentences in which one word occurs in different combinations, that children discover its precise meaning, aided as they are by observation exercised on the circumstances and on the gestures, the manner, and the tones of the foreigners amongst whom they live. A child living at home, who has a foreign nurse, draws the same conclusions under great disadvantages. The adult learning according to this system, receives Variations in which the foreign words are arranged in different combinations translated into English, and by this means he is enabled to appreciate their meaning without any of the uncertainties or difficulties which beset children who receive no explanations at all.

90. Language is the basis of grammar, but our school system makes grammar the basis of our knowledge of Latin, and hence it is illogically concluded that the grammar is the basis of the language. The grammarian does nothing to dispel this illusion. Latin has many blemishes and imperfections, but he leaves them unnoticed. The language is accepted by universal consent as the most complete model for study, and the critical knowledge of Latin is unquestionably of the highest value; but the language is not perfect, and therefore the grammar is not perfect. Comprehensive as it is, there are many constructions in other languages which it does not include. Universal grammar does not treat of these, and comparative grammar deals rather with words than constructions.

Although no one has ventured to maintain that the words

'language' and 'grammar' are synonymous, there prevails a notion that a knowledge of grammar is equivalent to a knowledge of the language to which it relates, and that it is greater, because it is a science which includes language. But every language contains its own grammar within itself, and the grammar is merely an abstraction from it. Technical grammar is a commentary and an exposition of the anatomy of a language, and the study of it is by no means essential. The idea that grammar contains the language within it springs from the practice of speaking of the terminations of nouns, verbs, etc. as if they belonged exclusively and essentially to grammar; but they are in reality integral parts of the language, and they may be learned much more easily and expeditiously by the right process, than when they are drawn up as *memoria technica* in little columns, having no coherent significance. But the term grammar is sometimes defined as correctness or propriety of speech; and in this comprehensive sense, every deviation from the established forms of expression is liable to be denounced as betraying an ignorance of grammar. Grammar is exalted to so lofty a position that there are many persons who cannot imagine the possibility of displacing it, or even reserving it for a few weeks. The definition which styles it 'the art of speaking correctly' has so little truth in it, that many persons who are well versed in grammar are either incapable of speaking at all, or else, when compelled, are so embarrassed by the conflicting recollections of rules, exceptions, cases, tenses, moods, and genders, that they cannot help speaking incorrectly. The grammar itself is the cause of their speaking ungrammatically.

91. The fabric of language is composed of materials so subtilely and exquisitely put together, that men of the highest intellectual endowments are sometimes found to be incapable of re-uniting them in their true connection, after their coherence has been dissolved. That idiomatic coherence should be maintained at all hazards, and every effort should be made to

prevent its disruption. For want of a precise definition of the word grammar, it is difficult to show that it is not the necessary beginning of a language. But language has no definite beginning, and grammar is a very questionable one. When employed as an initiation into the dead languages, it is so abstruse, that the knowledge which it imparts seems to have no solidity. Mastery affords a solid basis of language on which a very practical knowledge of grammar may be combined with idiomatic fluency of speech.

92. The cajolery that daily goes on between a master and his pupil, when they pretend that every lesson has been thoroughly acquired and retained, would be insufferable, if it were not veiled with the specious excuse that the intellectual training is the principal thing, and, inferentially, the *only* thing to be considered. But the judgment of parents and guardians rebels against this doctrine, because they know that examinations are instituted to find out, not how much a boy has studied, but how much he has acquired. Examinations show what has actually been accomplished, and thus lead to safe inferences as to the method of study and intellectual training employed. There is so much sham study, and so little method, in the intellectual training of the day, that many youths who have had a nominally excellent education are found to be grossly deficient when they undergo a trivial competitive examination. The fact that a youth has studied a certain number of pages, or chapters, affords no satisfaction to the parents, and they repel the assumption that all that has been learned is permanently retained, and that the reasoning powers have been successfully employed. Words are not to be a possession extrinsic to us; we are not merely *to go to them* in our bookshelves, and to assign meanings to them, when recognised by the eye, but we are to control and command them in such sort that they shall come to us, and do our bidding instantaneously. They are to be detained by the memory, in idiomatic array, and to be lashed to those synony-

mous English words which severally correspond to them: for we obtain a threefold power over a word when we have acquired the habit of employing it with promptitude in the three English meanings which it is capable of representing. In like manner the coherence of words in their idiomatic combinations must be permanently established in the memory by the habitual exercise of oral composition.

93. To meet the objections of those who argue from the shortness of the lessons, given under this plan, that the progress must necessarily be tardy, the manner in which all the latent Evolutions may be formed from sentences must now be explained. Every language has in itself a power of expansion when received in the proper form, and treated in such a manner that its growth may not be checked by any deviation, on the part of the recipient, from the principles of the process of nature. There are 200 or 300 common words in every language, some of which necessarily occur in every colloquial sentence. The profusion of speech which we observe in children, springs from their power of wielding those 200 or 300 words, with a gradually increasing stock of nouns and verbs interspersed. It is not by passively listening, but by imitation and by the active employment of the sentences they have learned by rote, and by freely interchanging the words, that they obtain such a variety of expression. Every familiar colloquial sentence of ten or twelve words may be matched, more or less completely, with other corresponding words. The following sentences exemplify this:—

Before his father came home, my friend brought your parcel.
After her brother went back, our servant took their bag.

The words must be arranged so as to be interchangeable without either infringing the laws of the language or injuring the sense. Thus the foregoing couplet may be interchanged in the following manner:—

pendix. A foreigner who masters these twenty words will become possessed of many hundreds of Variations. These are to be translated for him into his own language, to exhibit their precise meaning to him, before he commits the English ones to memory. It must be carefully borne in mind that a beginner is not to deduce Variations from a sentence of his own language, to be translated into that which he wishes to learn, but to receive the Variations of a foreign sentence, and to have them translated into English and written out on a separate paper, a copy of which should always be carried about with him for the frequent practice of oral composition.

96. Mastery leads to such a perfect command over a sentence and its Variations and Evolutions that each of them becomes an instrument by means of which the learner can immediately employ, with good effect, any congruous words in any subsequent sentence; this power cannot be directly obtained in any other way. It is impossible to learn 300 of the commonest words of any language, arranged in colloquial sentences, without obtaining materials for myriads of evolutions. Mastery employs the Variations and Evolutions of each sentence as receptacles for newly acquired words. The traditional ideas that a beginner can compose sentences for himself, without previously committing any models to memory, and that the learning of ready-made sentences is a useless, dishonest, and contemptible practice, have exercised their sway long enough, and produced a universal distaste for linguistry. When masses of words are learned without any intelligible connection, with all the nouns in the nominative case, and all the verbs in the root form, the learner who attempts to use the language colloquially becomes more and more embarrassed in proportion to the number of words so acquired. It is assumed that he knows all the Variations deducible from them because he knows the grammar, and this assumption, baseless as it is, is universally admitted, although the pupil himself is conscious of its hollowness.

97. A Compendious Form is given in the Appendix for the use of those who have studied a language without practising oral composition, and of those who have lost the power of speaking a language through disuse. This Table contains about 200 of the most necessary words. No nouns are given, because they ought to be used very sparingly, and because the learner should have the privilege of selecting and inserting those which he considers the most useful in the three classes which relate to persons, things, and places. The columns of verbs and adverbs contain a selection of those most generally required, but the learner may add to them any others which he considers necessary. The other columns are composed of words most of which are absolutely essential for colloquial use in all languages. The object is to enable the learner to remodel the English versions of those sentences which he has learned by heart. He may commence the alterations with a word from any one of the columns, and the order of their arrangement may be altered at pleasure. The formation of new sentences also will be facilitated by using this Table. From this Form the learner should copy out three of the words in each column, keeping open three columns for the nouns. The foreign words are never to be placed before the eye arranged in this columnar form, because they will produce in the memory that confusion which it is one of the primary objects of this system to prevent. This Table will be an aid to those who can converse on a small scale in enlarging their sphere of operations. Sentences of six or eight words in length may generally be amplified by the addition of a relative pronoun (with or without a preposition), and followed by another clause of similar length. Conditional words, such as 'although,' 'since,' etc., may then be prefixed, and this will enable the learner to add another clause to the length of the sentences. He should employ a competent native to write them out in both languages on different papers, and to insert under each sentence some suitable interchangeable words. It is important that he should have different types of sentences presented to him in

nor by the study of the classics. The power of expressing thought with perfect freedom in forms of speech which are antagonistic to those of his own language, is essential, and the earlier the stage in which he acquires that power the better. The idiomatic collocation of the foreign words must become habitual; he must cease to think about his own when he is speaking the foreign language, and thus emancipate himself once for all from the odious habit of literal translation. There are many persons who master one language by dint of grammar, of study, and of subsequent intercourse with those who speak it, who nevertheless make no further advance in linguistry, and in attempting a second language derive no benefit from their former efforts. This arises from their want of discernment of the true cause of their success in placing words together in genuine idiomatic order. They do not perceive that their preparatory studies were not the true basis of their colloquial power. They are reluctant to dispense with them in a new undertaking; and they will not believe that the surest and most direct course is to master long sentences first, and to study the language in regular form afterwards.

101. If it be objected that the process of nature upon which this system is founded exhibits great imperfections, in respect to the blunders and defects in the performances of children, let it be borne in mind that there are some languages which have continued unchanged for many generations. This fact shows that language is communicable and receivable without any teacher, and without suffering any detriment. Even in highly educated races, there is no individual whose speech is absolutely free from imperfections. But the quality of the phraseology of individual children is not to be taken into account at all. Whether in learning his own language or a foreign one, a child must necessarily imbibe the phraseology of the persons with whom he lives; and if he speaks exactly as his models do, the imitation is complete, and therefore the process of nature is perfect.

102. By mastering the Variations of one long complicated foreign sentence, the reader will be able to discern the consistency, the symmetry, and correctness of this method, much more clearly and completely than by reasonings, or experience obtained from teaching according to other methods. It is a process whereby great economy of time and labour is secured. When the evolutions springing from a small number of words arranged in sentences are taken into consideration, it is clear that no scheme can be put into competition with this, in respect to its comprehensive, practical results. It will be seen from the foregoing pages that Mastery is a reasoned process founded upon induction from facts ascertained by examination of the procedure of those who have succeeded in speaking foreign languages idiomatically. The main source of their success is that they learn idiomatic sentences, and then transpose and interchange the words by efforts of memory constantly and actively renewed. It is by the principles of imitation and repetition that a good pronunciation is attained, and the habit is formed of reproducing the foreign words in their idiomatic order. To prevent that waste of time and labour which leads to so many failures and disappointments, the attention is restricted to short lessons, and all other words and all grammatical instruction are excluded. The beginner is not allowed to trust to his memory unaided, but is required to refresh it at the beginning of each sitting. The frequency of the Exercises conducted on this plan ensures the fluency, the accuracy, and the promptitude which constitute Mastery. Mastery produces a daily unification and consolidation of a beginner's practical knowledge of the words, of their special powers, and of the constructions, and thus brings the scheme within the approved definition of the term 'method ;' namely, unity with progress.

103. Mastery is specially designed as a progressive development of the power of using the constructions of any language for all ordinary purposes. This is to be effected with a very

limited number of words, because the greater the number a beginner undertakes to wield, the greater must be the delay and the difficulty in accomplishing it. This method inspires the learner with a peculiar energy which gratifies and stimulates him. The knowledge it conveys is precise and definite, and it confers upon him a critical accuracy which qualifies him at once to impart the same instructions to others. That principle which secures a thoroughness of execution on a limited scale from the outset, is one that will recommend itself to the beginner in every pursuit of life wherein skill and intelligence are called forth, and in which self-discipline can exercise its moral influence.

104. If the interpretation of nature herein put forth can be accepted as the true solution of a highly interesting problem, linguistry may claim to be ranked among the sciences; its recognition may be long deferred, but in its developement it will tend to advance the great cause of education, by rescuing for higher purposes a large portion of the time now wasted in boyhood in the study of technical grammar, and by promoting an accomplishment without which a classical education is not complete. It will facilitate self-culture, and it will contribute to the extension of the civilising and ennobling influences of Christianity throughout the habitable world.

APPENDIX II.

Compendious Form for the preparation of Exercises in Oral Composition.—(Vide Paragraph 96.)

unless	thou	this	his	which	am, art, are	made, making	together	on
if	they	more	their	who	is, was, were	given	into	into
whether	you	such	your	whom	be, being, been	taken, took	of	of
although	he	the others	its	how much	do, does, did	sent, sending	instead of	instead of
yet, but	she	any	mine	how many	have, has, having	brought, bringing	between	between
besides	it	every	own	why	will, shall, should	found, finding	out of	out of
except	myself	some	hers	can, could, would	can, could, would	saw, seeing	about	about
during	themselves	another	yours	may, might	ought, must	called, calling	beyond	beyond
whilst	several	those	our	wilhence	ought, must	went, gone	over	over
because	most	most	thine	here	me	put, putting	through	through
for, as	these	my	theirs	whose	her	told, telling	near	near
whereas	a, an, the	what	my	it	been, being	first	among	among
since	other	thy	thy	him	had, having	yes	below	below
after	either	her	her	us	said, saying	away	under	under
instead of	neither	ours	ours	them	liked, liking	then	towards	towards
for	some of it	mine	mine	can, could	bought, buying	best	in	in
that, lest	no	no	shall, should	have	soon	down	down	down
till, until	more of them	none	will, would	have	always	Yesterday	to	to
and, or	several of those	—	may, might	be	yes	about	at	at
upon	many	—	must	have been	no	afterwards	behind	behind
whenever	great	—	ought to	have been	no	well	beside	beside
therefore	few	—	going to	have been	before	before	without	without
upon, in	old	—	about to be	have been	ago	ago	concerning	concerning
from	large	—	—	—	to-morrow	to-morrow	before	before
without	small	—	—	—	there	there	there	there
before	new	—	—	—	now	8	9	9

Nouns of Person.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The Foreign words are not to be arranged in Columns as in this Form.

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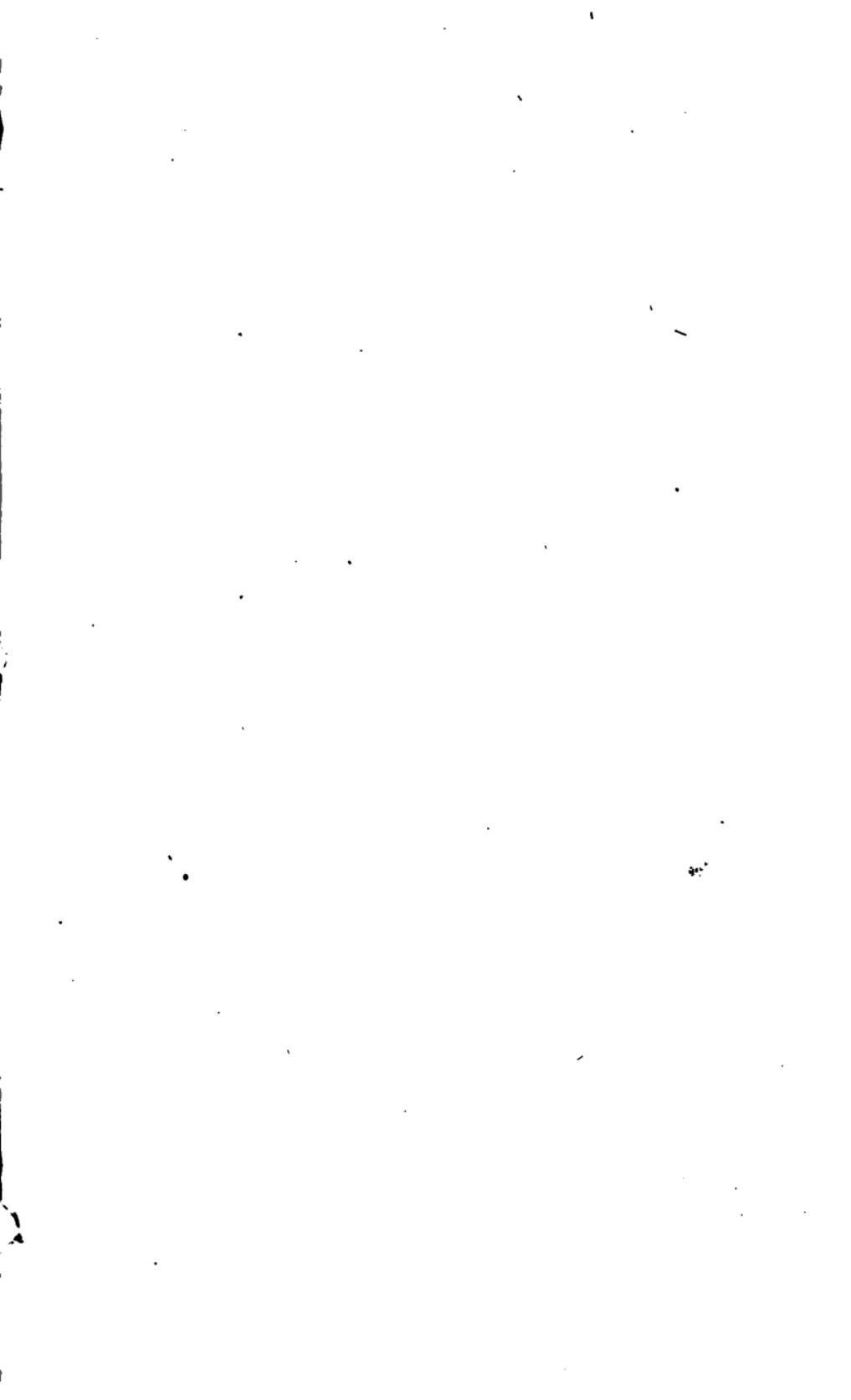
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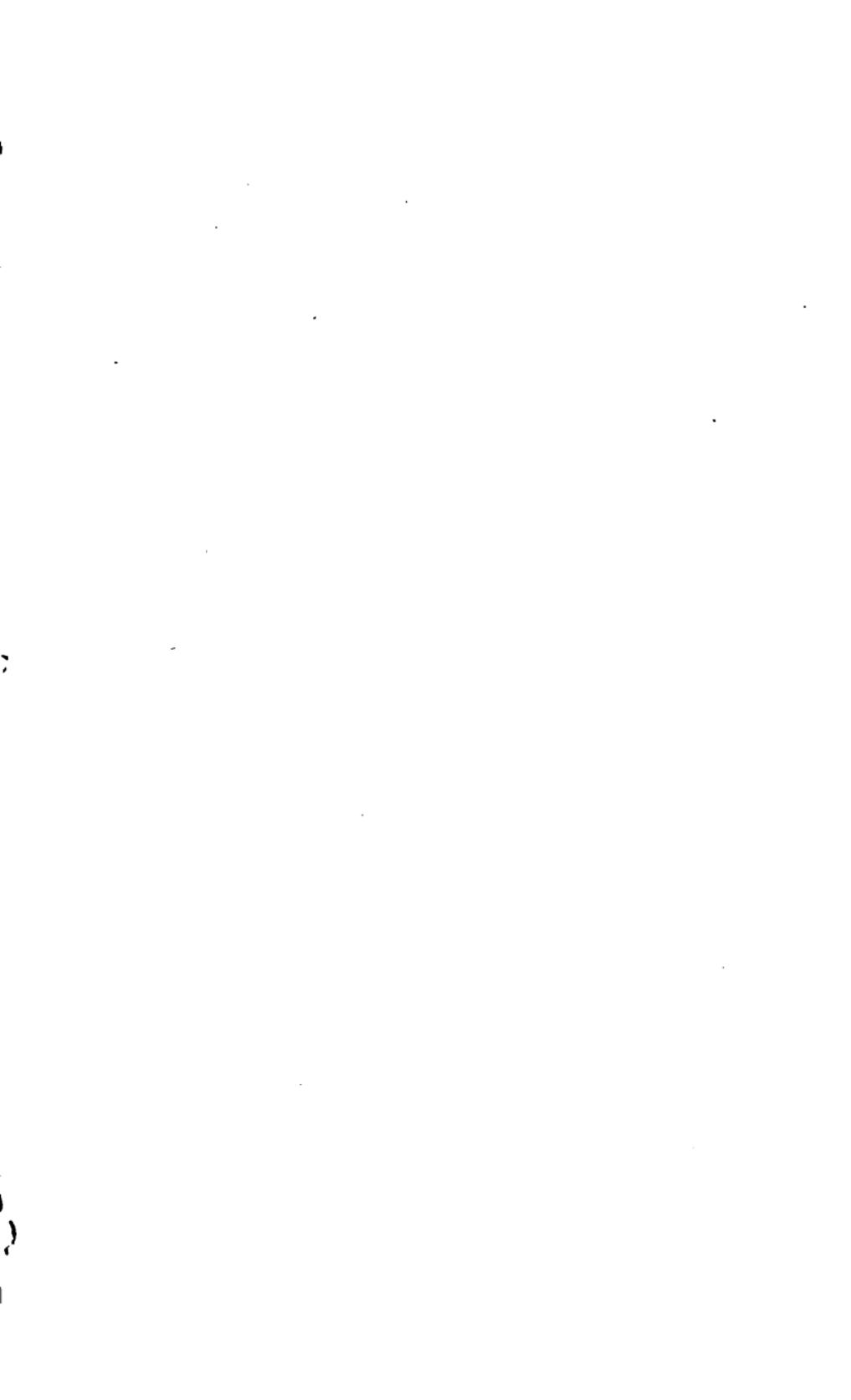
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